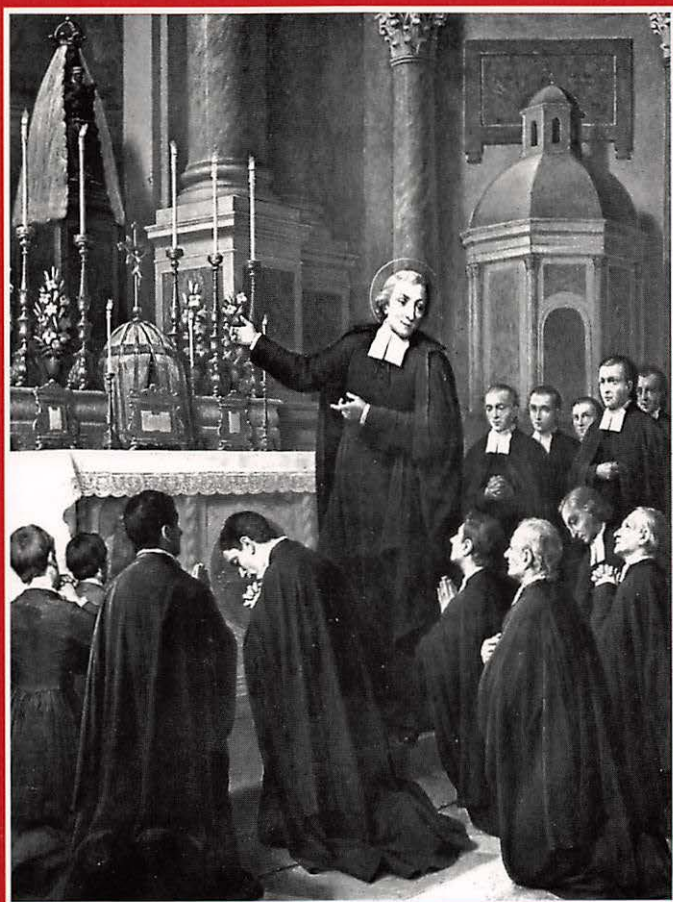
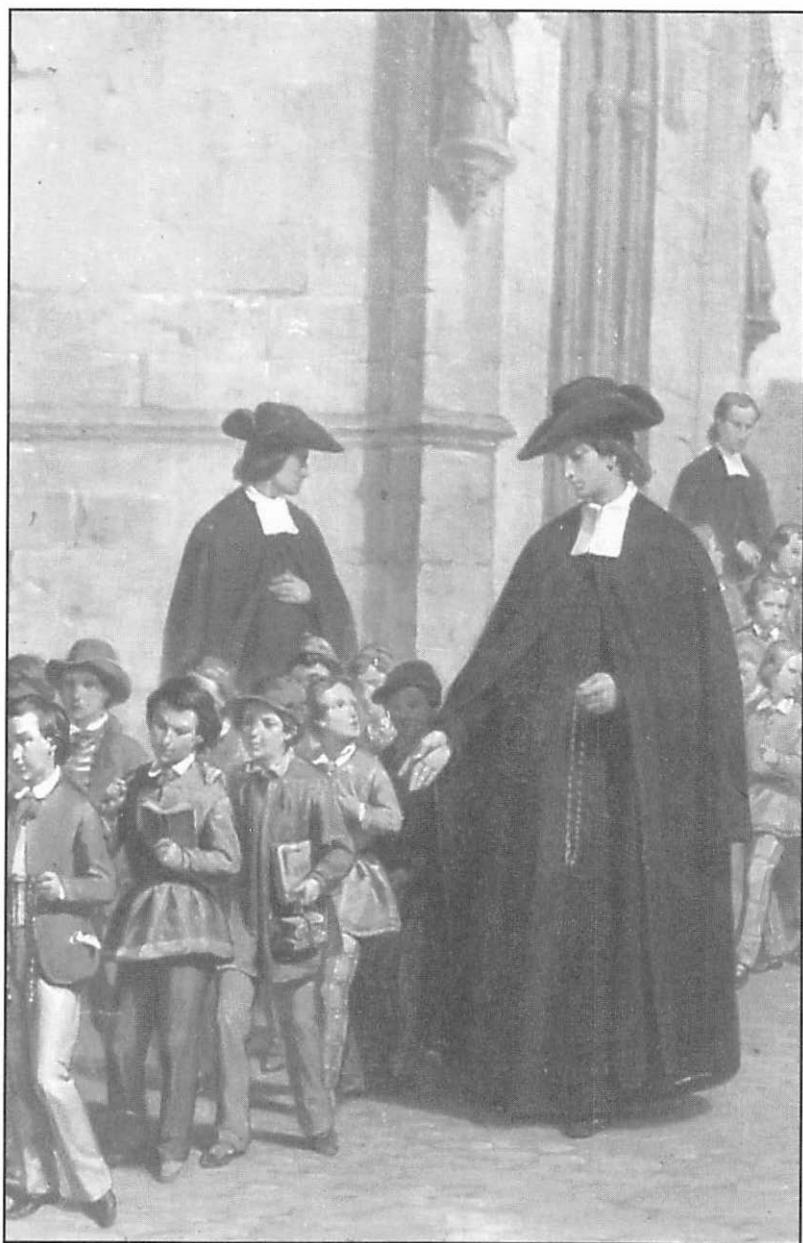


# The First De La Salle Brothers 1681–1719



Augustine Loes, FSC

**The First  
De La Salle Brothers  
1681-1719**



Frontispiece: "Brothers' pupils leaving church after Mass," painting by Jean-Joseph Lacroix. Photo E. Rousset (*J. B. de La Salle: Iconographie*. Boulogne: Limei, 1979, slide 178).



Frontispiece: "Brothers' pupils leaving church after Mass," painting by Jean-Joseph Lacroix. Photo E. Rousset (*J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie*, Boulogne: Limet, 1979, slide 178).

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De La Salle Brothers  
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by  
**Augustine Loes, FSC**

**Lasallian Publications  
Christian Brothers Conference  
Landover, Maryland**

# Lasallian Publications

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Cover: De La Salle and his Brothers at the shrine of Our Lady of Liesse, near Laon, in the year 1686; painting by Giovanni Gagliardi. Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, Boulogne: Limet, 1979, slide 101, plate 42).

Gratefully dedicated to  
Luke Salm, FSC, STD,  
Lasallian scholar,  
loyal Brother,  
generous friend

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Sponsored by Christian Brothers Conference (the Regional Conference of Christian Brothers of the United States of America and Toronto), Lasallian Publications will include nineteen volumes on the life, writings, and work of John Baptist de La Salle (1651–1719), Founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and on the early history of the Brothers. These volumes will be presented in two series.

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Heartfelt thanks is also given to the Brothers of the Queen of Peace community for their patience and for providing a major portion of the cost of living during the past ten years while I have been working as a volunteer for Lasallian Publications.

Augustine Loes  
4 March 1997

## Preface

Brother Maurice Hermans (1911–1987), the first editor of the *Cahiers lasalliens* (a series of over fifty volumes of texts, studies, and documents published by the Generalate in Rome, beginning in 1959), expressed the desire to publish a volume about the first disciples of John Baptist de La Salle.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, Brother Maurice did not live to fulfill this desire; eventually, it is hoped, such a volume, drawing on many documents in the Archives of the Generalate in Rome and elsewhere, will be part of the *Cahiers lasalliens*. In the meantime, the editorial board of Lasallian Publications decided to publish a book in English about the first De La Salle Brothers, based on published materials that are presently available.

Over 250 Brothers lived and worked with De La Salle during the forty years he dedicated himself to founding the Institute. Most of these Brothers persevered until death and gave many years of often heroic service to the varied apostolates established by De La Salle. Information about most of them, however, is often restricted to a few details regarding their lives, with little or no record of their work as Brothers.

The present study, therefore, is more like a documentary or a chronology rather than a history. Only in a few instances can something be told about a particular Brother's personality and the many assignments given to him. Nonetheless, there is a value in presenting this limited information about these first De La Salle Brothers, especially in consideration of the light which it shines on the person of De La Salle himself.

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1. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 24.

## Principal References

The sources of information about the Brothers who lived and worked with John Baptist de La Salle are quite limited. Canon Jean-Baptiste Blain, a contemporary and friend of De La Salle, wrote an extensive biography of the Founder but seldom gave the names of individual Brothers. As a supplement to his biography, however, he wrote a lengthy account of the life of Brother Barthélemy, the first Superior, and shorter accounts of five other Brothers known to the biographer.

Two other biographers of De La Salle were Brother Bernard Dauge, a young Brother who lived with him, and Dom François-Élie Maillefer, OSB, a nephew of De La Salle. Only part of Bernard's work, a manuscript of eighty-six pages, has been preserved. Maillefer wrote a biography of De La Salle in 1723 and then revised it in 1740. The Cahiers lasalliens contain photomechanical reproductions of the first editions of these works. Bernard's Life is in volume 4; Maillefer's is in volume 6; Blain's, in four books, is in volumes 7 and 8.

Two nineteenth-century publications by Brother Lucard (Jean-Baptiste Larrondo) give considerable information: *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, two volumes under one cover (Paris: Procure Générale, 1873), and *Annales de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes*, also in two volumes (Paris: Procure Générale, 1883).

Lucard often gives archival references not available today for some of his facts, but some of his other statements have been disproved by modern research. His work often provides sound information as well as interpretations of events not found elsewhere.

More recent studies of De La Salle include considerable research into documents found in municipal and episcopal archives or libraries, as well as in the Generalate Archives in Rome. One person in particular who has published many volumes of such research is Brother Louis-Marie Aroz, FSC, whose work is found in more than twenty volumes of the Cahiers lasalliens.

Cahiers lasalliens 3, by Brother Maurice Hermans, is a reproduction of two manuscript booklets, *Livret des Premiers Vœux*, a collection of the actual vow formulas of the original Brothers, and *Catalogue des Frères*, a register of the Brothers alive in the year 1714 and of those who entered afterward, up to the year 1725—for a total of 228 names. Some of the details of this register are incomplete, and it does not include Brothers who died or left the Institute before 1714.

In addition to the Cahiers lasalliens, the following titles are the main sources used in this study of the Brothers who lived and worked with John Baptist de La Salle:

Blain, Jean-Baptiste. *Abrégé (Summary)*, a supplement to the life of John Baptist de La Salle in which Blain gives biographies of six Brothers. Cahiers lasalliens 8, last section, pp. 1–123.

Brisebois, Raymond. *Les Premiers Frères dans l'Institut des F.É.C.* Longueuil, Québec: Frères des Écoles chrétiennes du Canada francophone, 1995.

Calcutt, Alfred. *De La Salle, a City Saint*. Oxford: De La Salle Publications, 1993.

Lett, Émile. *Les Premiers Biographes de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*. Paris: Liget, 1956.

Gallego, Saturnino. *Vida y Pensamiento de San Juan Bautista de La Salle*. Volume 1, *Biografía*. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1986.

La Salle, John Baptist de. *The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle*. Translation by Colman Molloy, FSC. Romeoville, Ill.: Lasallian Publications, 1988. Citations either give the number of the letter and of the paragraph (1.2 signifies letter 1, paragraph 2) or refer to the page number in the case of a commentary.

La Salle, Jean-Baptiste de. *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*. Édition critique par le Frère Félix-Paul [Vandamme]. Paris: Procure Générale, 1952. Citations give the page number of the commentary.

Poutet, Yves. *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*. Volumes 1 and 2. Rennes: Imprimeries réunies, 1970.

Rigault, Georges. *Histoire générale de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes*. Volume 1. Paris: Plon, 1936. Volume 2. Paris: Plon, 1938.

Vue du Frère Barthélemy. Paris: Procure Générale, 1933.

Vue du Frère Irénée. Paris: Procure Générale, 1930.

Because the data found in these sources are sometimes contradictory, certain questions about the facts cannot always be resolved.

Monsieur de La Salle est celui qui a fondé les frères dits De La Salle, qui font les petites écoles. [Monsieur de La Salle is the one who founded the Brothers, known as De La Salle Brothers, who conduct the Little Schools.]

From a 1720 document of Père François Leschassier, Superior of the Society of Saint Sulpice, in *Cahiers lasalliens* 41/2 (Rome, 1979), p. 269.

Founded in France by Saint John Baptist de La Salle (1651–1719), the Brothers' Institute has as its official title, Brothers of the Christian Schools (in Latin, *Fratres Scholarum Christianarum*). The Brothers are variously known in the English-speaking world as Christian Brothers, as De La Salle Christian Brothers, or simply as De La Salle Brothers.

# Chapter One

## A New Religious Family

The original prayer of the Church for the Mass in honor of Saint John Baptist de La Salle credits the saint with “forming a new religious family in the Church.” In his first book on De La Salle, Brother W. J. Battersby devotes a chapter to De La Salle’s creation of a “new religious order,” the Brothers of the Christian Schools. He says that the idea of forming a congregation of laymen for the Christian education of the poor was “a complete novelty.”<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of Christian education of the poor did not make it a novelty, but the fact that it was a congregation of laymen. There were congregations of priests formed to teach the poor, but as Battersby points out, they tended to drift away from the education of the poor. Clerical education in Latin and Greek led priests to have a preference for teaching the classics in college. For this reason De La Salle forbade his Brothers to study Latin or aspire to the priesthood.

De La Salle did not start out to establish a religious order, and he never made the move to have Rome officially approve what he founded.<sup>2</sup> Neither, at first, did he want to be involved with schools for the poor. Only gradually, out of his natural kindness, did he become involved, first by helping a zealous layman, Adrien Nyel, to start three schools for poor boys in Reims. Then, led by circumstances, he gave more and more help to the teachers conducting these schools. Finally, after about four years of increasing involvement with the teachers, from 1679 to 1683, he realized that the work of staffing elementary Christian schools for the poor was the life work that God was asking

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1. Battersby, *De La Salle, A Pioneer of Modern Education*, p. 50.

2. Cahiers lasalliens 11, pp. 92–101.



Detail of the engraving by J. B. Scotin of a lost painting by Pierre Léger. This engraving has been the primary source of all subsequent efforts to portray an image of John Baptist de La Salle. It first appeared on page 117 of Blain's *Life of De La Salle*, published in 1733. Considering the challenge to an engraver and the fact that the face of the original print from which Rousset's photo was made is less than an inch high, it is remarkable how much of De La Salle's personality seems to be revealed, notably his tranquility and affability. *Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, Boulogne: Limet, 1979, slide 295, plate 10).*



Detail of the engraving by J. B. Scotin of a lost painting by Pierre Léger. This engraving has been the primary source of all subsequent efforts to portray an image of John Baptist de La Salle. It first appeared on page 117 of Blain's *Life of De La Salle*, published in 1733. Considering the challenge to an engraver and the fact that the face of the original print from which Rousset's photo was made is less than an inch high, it is remarkable how much of De La Salle's personality seems to be revealed, notably his tranquility and affability. *Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, Boulogne: Limet, 1979, slide 295, plate 10).*

him to do. As he wrote in a memoir several years later, "God willed to commit me entirely to the development of the schools [and led me] in an imperceptible way . . . so that one commitment led to another in a way that I did not foresee in the beginning."<sup>3</sup>

De La Salle was a practical person. He realized that the success of good schools depended on the competence and dedication of the teachers. He also realized that schools for the poor could not provide teachers with adequate financial security, and he came to the conclusion that their work had to be motivated by religious dedication, supported by the strong bond of community life. It was the same practicality that excluded the study of Latin, both for teachers and for pupils, and restricted membership in the community to laymen.

So De La Salle concentrated on the religious formation of a community of lay Brothers and on the efficient operation of the schools. He studied the lifestyle of religious orders, and he learned as much as he could about different school programs that were developed, or were in the process of developing, during his time. His thoroughness in doing this gave his project the stability to continue despite suppression of the Brothers during the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century, then again at the beginning of the twentieth century. The religious formation that he gave the Brothers fostered not only the stability of the teachers but also their dedication to the educational efficiency of their work with children.

In his work, then, with the first Brothers of the Institute, De La Salle created an original program for the training of apostolic laymen. Brothers Michel Sauvage and Miguel Campos express this clearly:

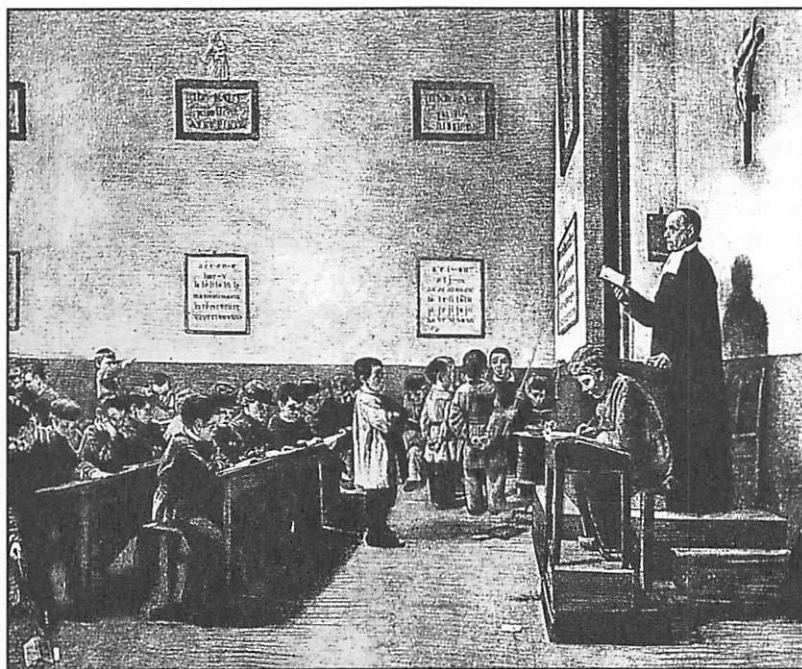
. . . it was his determination to dedicate his community wholly to the effective service of poor and abandoned youngsters that chiefly explained the decision initially taken, and then vigorously asserted and defended by the Founder and the first Brothers, of having all the members without exception remain laymen. The evangelical service of the poor thus gave rise to a new type of religious society.<sup>4</sup>

It has become clear since Vatican II that the forming of the laity in the work of Christian education, especially for the poor, is still a principal part of the charism of the Institute founded by De La Salle. The story of the first Brothers formed by the Founder has, therefore, an interest and a relevance today.

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3. Blain, vol. 1, book 1, chap. 9, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 169.

4. Sauvage, Michel, and Miguel Campos, *Announcing the Gospel to the Poor* (Romeville, Ill.: Christian Brothers National Office, 1981), p. 68.

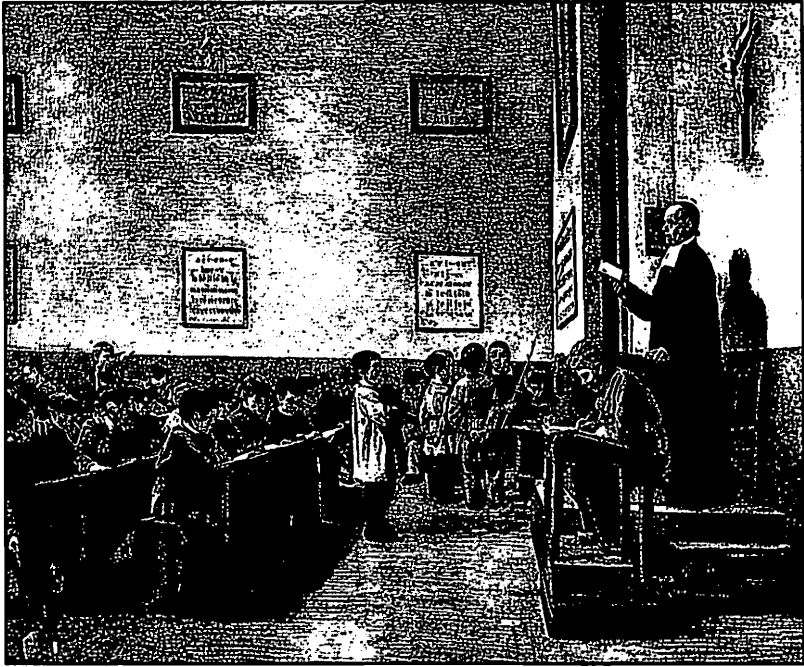


"A Brother in Class," engraving by F. Bouvin, 1873. Photo E. Rousset (*J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie*, 1979, slide 116, plate 146).

De La Salle himself was heroic in leaving his original world of the upper class of society and laying aside in his everyday life the status and privilege of his own priestly vocation. He never lost a high regard for the priesthood, but he left one world to become part of another on an entirely different social level in order to live with and train the Brothers. He also entered the world of the poor to organize schools for their children, supervising the classrooms in order to understand and assist the work of the Brothers, and on several occasions he took up the task of teaching as a substitute for a sick or otherwise absent Brother. He earned the title conferred on him by the Church in 1950, Patron Saint of All Teachers and Student Teachers.<sup>5</sup>

To appreciate fully what De La Salle accomplished, it is necessary to know that good schools for poor boys did not exist at that time. There was no free public education such as exists today. Education was not considered the task of the state but belonged almost exclusively to the Church. There were schools, called Little Schools, which

5. Pius XII, *Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam*, 15 May 1950.



"A Brother in Class," engraving by F. Bouvin, 1873. Photo E. Rousset (*J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 116, plate 146*).

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5. Pius XII, *Ad Perpetuam Rei Memoriam*, 15 May 1950.

were organized by the diocese, but these took care mostly of those who could pay a tuition. There was also the Guild of Writing Masters under the authority of the king, but these teachers also required a fee. Some parishes conducted Charity Schools for poor boys, but they served very few pupils. The teachers were not trained for teaching, were generally poorly paid, and were usually not committed to stay in the work if they were able to secure some other employment.

The need De La Salle saw and set about to serve was very clear and very serious. It was his genius to develop a corps of dedicated laymen to meet this need. By modeling his group of Brothers on a novel adaptation of religious orders, he secured a permanence in his efforts that escaped those of others who had tried to accomplish the same thing.

Another reason De La Salle succeeded was his respect for the laymen he was training and for their ability to organize their own lives and assume responsibility for the direction of their work and their religious consecration. This again was an aspect of his practical approach to the work he had set out to accomplish.

Within seven years of the beginning of his association with the Brothers—that is, in 1687—De La Salle had the Brothers elect their own Superior to replace himself. His principal biographer, Blain, intent on proving the heroicity of the Founder's virtues, attributes this move to De La Salle's humility, in accord with one of the ideals of the spirituality of his time. There is no doubt that the move illustrates an unusual amount of humility to step down from a position of authority and assume a lesser role, albeit still one of adviser and guide. In his day especially, it was quite a move for a priest to become subject to a layman. But it is a mistake to make the practice of humility the prime motive for De La Salle's action, which the vicars-general of the archbishop of Reims required him to revoke almost immediately.

De La Salle consistently urged the Brothers to take charge of the society they were forming. The rules for their spiritual life and for the operation of the schools were formulated over many years of experience by the Brothers together with De La Salle. The texts were probably written by De La Salle but with the full cooperation of the Brothers.

In 1694, when twelve Brothers made perpetual vows with De La Salle and a rather definitive Rule had been written in manuscript form, De La Salle felt that the establishment of their society was fairly complete. He then moved again to have the Brothers elect one of their own as Superior. This time, however, he was the one they re-elected unanimously, not just once but immediately after the first vote,

when he begged them to reconsider and vote again. The next day, to make his point emphatic, he had them all sign a document that clearly stated that they would never afterward accept anyone to membership who had received Holy Orders and no one as Superior other than one of their own.

This is a remarkable conviction of De La Salle. He worked consistently to give the Brothers full responsibility for their own lives. The Brothers showed this from time to time by confronting the Founder himself when they felt he was not making the right decisions. They wrote papers setting out their arguments, and they overruled decisions he had made, for example, about accepting back Brothers who had left the Institute and wanted to return. They simply felt he had let his kindness sway his good judgment. Toward the end of his life, in 1714, when he was staying in one of the communities in the south of France, in Grenoble, and it seemed that he had no intention of returning to Paris as Superior, the principal Brothers around Paris sent him a directive, based on his perpetual vow of obedience, to come back and resume the role of Superior. He did return, but even then, partly because of illness, he made it his goal to step aside and let Brother Barthélemy, Director of Novices, carry on the administration of the Institute.

De La Salle also trained his Brothers to recognize and accept an autonomy of their own, in some ways independent of the clergy, though respectful of clerical status and authority. He made it clear to them, because of the conflict among the bishops themselves regarding the authority of the pope, that his lay Brothers had to make judgments about Church leaders and follow some but not others. His successor, Brother Barthélemy, was both diplomatic and shrewd in dealing with bishops whose practices and policies did not conform to what De La Salle had trained the Brothers to accept.

Some understanding of the spirituality prevalent in seventeenth-century France also helps us to appreciate the lives of the early Brothers. De La Salle trained his men in the same discipline he had developed as a seminarian under the teaching of the Sulpicians as well as the other teachers during his years of study for the doctorate in theology. Certain Christian truths were basic to this spirituality: the infinite majesty of God, the supreme importance of Christ, and the sinfulness of human nature. Perhaps central to these basic truths was the imitation of Christ in the mysteries of his life, especially the Incarnation and the Redemption by his death and resurrection. The Brothers were trained to imitate the mind and action of Christ when he humbled his divinity by becoming a man and humbled his humanity

by dying on the Cross. Certain other elements characterize De La Salle's contribution to the spirituality of the Brothers: a focus on the presence of God in daily life as well as in prayer and a tender love for the poor, especially the poor children in need of Christian education.

In everyday life, this meant the practice of great self-control, silence, interior recollection, attempt at continual prayer, acts of self-denial and mortification, and blind obedience to superiors as the primary virtue of community life. Many of these practices are not emphasized the same way in the spirituality prevalent today, so that an appreciation of this cultural difference is necessary for a good understanding of the lives of the early Brothers. So also is a knowledge of what it was like to live together in community.

From the beginning, De La Salle and the Brothers worked diligently to draw up regulations, based on experience, to govern their daily lives.<sup>6</sup> These regulations were at first simple directives which the Founder borrowed from his own experience at home and in the seminary. For example, there was a set hour for rising and for retiring. As stipulated in the Practice of the Daily Regulations, rising every day was at 4:30,<sup>7</sup> retiring (candles out) at 9:15.<sup>8</sup> The Rule itself also stated that all the Brothers sleep in a common dormitory.<sup>9</sup>

The documents of these regulations were in manuscript form, the earliest extant being the Rules of 1705. Nothing was printed until 1726, but it is clear that as early as 1694, De La Salle and the Brothers began making manuscript copies of the way of life that they had been living over the years.

It was a strictly organized life. Besides specific times for rising and retiring, communal prayer was scheduled for 5:00 A.M., followed by Mass. The study of religion (catechism) preceded breakfast at 7:15. During breakfast a book was read that De La Salle and the Brothers had put together as a teacher's manual on the operation of the school, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*.<sup>10</sup> After breakfast, before going to school, the Brothers recited together three decades of the rosary.

Such detail was typical of the regulations for the whole day. Silence was the norm, unless there was an absolute necessity to speak. Recreation consisted of two periods of spiritual conversation, one after dinner, which was at the mid-day break from school, and the other

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6. Cahiers lasalliens 25, pp. 3–5.

7. Ibid., p. 95.

8. Ibid., p. 102.

9. Ibid., p. 21.

10. *Conduite des Écoles chrétiennes*, Cahiers lasalliens 24; for the English edition, see La Salle, John Baptist de, *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*.



"The Thursday Walk," a painting by Gautier, 1853. Photo E. Rousset (*J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 120, plate 147*).

after the evening meal. Each lasted half an hour; the Rule specified the topics to be discussed.

School lasted until 4:00 or 4:30 P.M., depending on the season of the year. The pupils were generally seven to eleven years old, and there were usually as many as 60 to 100 in a class, though 60 was the desired maximum of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*. School was ordinarily held five days a week, with Thursday a free day. It was part of the schedule for the Brothers to go on a long walk Thursday afternoons, weather permitting. This must have been a welcome respite from the usual day of work. Sundays were almost as arduous as weekdays, for the Brothers brought their pupils to the parish Mass in the morning and to Vespers in the middle of the afternoon. An hour and a half of catechism was taught in school before Vespers.

After school on weekdays, the Brothers assembled in the community, which was often in the same building, for an hour of spiritual reading and prayer before supper. After the evening recreation, there was a period of study of religion (catechism) until night prayer at 8:30 and then retiring.

It is clear that the Brothers were trying to combine a strict monastic way of life with a demanding apostolic ministry. It is a fact that many were unable to survive such a regimen, as we will see in the story of their lives.



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# Chapter Two

## The Earliest Brothers

In June 1681, John Baptist de La Salle brought six or seven teachers to live with him in his home on the rue Sainte Marguerite in the city of Reims. These men were conducting schools under the supervision of Adrien Nyel in three parishes. Two years earlier, in April 1679, with the help of De La Salle, Nyel had opened a free school for poor children for M. Dorigny, the pastor of the parish of Saint Maurice. Shortly afterward, similar schools were opened in the parishes of Saint Jacques and Saint Symphorien.

When De La Salle brought the teachers into his home, his relatives became quite disturbed, because they regarded teachers as uncouth and altogether improper company for De La Salle's three younger brothers. Rather quickly, though De La Salle was the legal guardian of his brothers, the two younger brothers—first, Pierre, almost fifteen years old, and then a short time later, Jean-Remy, not quite twelve—were taken away from De La Salle by his sister Marie and her husband Jean Maillefer. The older brother, Jean-Louis, seventeen years of age, chose to stay with De La Salle.

De La Salle himself describes what he thought of the people who were the early teachers in these schools, when he wrote a document about the origin of his work with them: he states that he considered these men beneath the social status of his valet. In a similar document written around 1690, he also has occasion to explain the character of the first teachers:

The members of this community [are] for the most part men of no culture [that is, of limited education] who usually act only through impulse, [and] they need something which will impress upon them that they form part of a society, both to encourage

them to enter as well as to retain them therein and lead them to observe the rules. . . . Several came in order to be trained so that they could set themselves up afterward [as teachers]. Many asked for a salary, and a number of others thought that we ought to be greatly indebted to them for conforming to our life and manner of dress.<sup>1</sup>

There is a record of the death of one of these early teachers—Christophe by name—in the De La Salle home on 15 May 1682. The certificate of his burial describes him as a “schoolteacher living with De La Salle in the parish of Saint Symphorien.”<sup>2</sup> This, of course, was before the teachers decided to assume the form of an association, or society, to conduct schools for the poor and to be called Brothers of the Christian Schools. Some writers have suggested that Christophe was the youngster, fourteen years old, whom Nyel brought with him from Rouen in 1679 to help in the school he hoped to establish. This is only an hypothesis based on the fact that Christophe’s burial certificate does not give him a family name, which might indicate that he was an orphan, a stranger in Reims, or both.<sup>3</sup>

De La Salle’s plan to help the teachers by having them live with him did not succeed. Some found the life boring, the spiritual exercises a burden, the food too simple, the lack of freedom unbearable.<sup>4</sup> Others had to be dismissed for one reason or another.<sup>5</sup> Before the end of the year 1681, all of the original teachers had gone except for two or three.

New teachers more willing to live an orderly life fortunately replaced them; they had a talent for teaching, a good level of piety, and an aptitude for community life.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that these three characteristics listed by the biographer Bernard correspond to the three essential elements of the Brother’s vocation described in the Rule of the Institute today.<sup>7</sup> Some of these new teachers gave up advanced studies and came to join the project of the schools for the poor rather than continue on for some ecclesiastical position or other profession.<sup>8</sup> These later recruits were much better qualified than the original group for

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1. Cahiers lasalliens 11, pp. 349–354.

2. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 1, p. 630, note 35.

3. Ibid.

4. Maillefer, Cahiers lasalliens 6, p. 51; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 47.

5. Blain, vol. 1, book 1, chap. 10, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 179

6. Bernard, Cahiers lasalliens 4, p. 47; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 306.

7. *The Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, 1987, art. 10.

8. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 1, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 224.

the work of teaching. In a short time, De La Salle had more teachers than before, and the work of the schools continued.

On 24 June 1682, De La Salle and the teachers moved out of the house on the rue Sainte Marguerite to the rue Neuve, a much poorer area of the city. De La Salle had begun to take greater responsibility for the school project. Four days earlier, he had written a letter in response to a request for teachers from the town of Château-Porcien:

Reims, 20 June 1682

Gentlemen,

Even were I to take but little interest in what concerns the glory of God, I would indeed be quite insensitive not to be moved by the urgent pleas of your Reverend Dean and by the courteous tone of the letter with which you have honored me.

It would be wrong of me, Gentlemen, not to send you school-teachers from our community, in view of the enthusiasm and zeal you show for the Christian education and instruction of your children.

So please be assured that nothing is dearer to my heart than to support your good intentions in this matter. By this Saturday I will send you two schoolteachers, with whom I trust you will be satisfied, to open classes the day following the feast of Saint Peter. I assure you that I am very much obliged to you for your courteous remarks.

I beg you, Gentlemen, to believe that with respect and in Our Lord, I am, your very humble and obedient servant,

De La Salle

Priest, Canon of Reims.<sup>9</sup>

It is significant that in his letter to these gentlemen of Château-Porcien, De La Salle speaks of sending teachers, not Brothers. It is not certain when De La Salle's community decided to adopt a uniform garb and be called Brothers. It was possibly in 1684, though the date is generally placed later.

It is estimated that De La Salle was involved with training at least thirty Brothers between the date he moved into the house on the rue Neuve in June 1682 and the time in February 1688 when he went to Paris with two Brothers to staff the school in the parish of Saint Sulpice. What follows is an attempt to describe who these Brothers were.

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9. *The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle*, 1.

It is probable that as many as seven Brothers died during these years. There are different opinions about their names. Blain, who says that more than six died,<sup>10</sup> claims that Jean-François was the first to die and gives the year 1684.<sup>11</sup> His description of the Brother's death corresponds to Bernard's account of the first Brother to die, though Bernard does not give the Brother's name.<sup>12</sup>

The only other name that Blain and Bernard give of a Brother to die is Bourlette, whom Bernard says died after the one whom he does not name.

Aroz claims that Jean-François was the Brother's name for Côme Boiserins, who died on 24 March 1684, basing his claim on the correspondence between the date Blain gives for the death of Jean-François (1684) and the date of the death of Boiserins on the burial certificate.<sup>13</sup> The name on the burial certificate is probably a civil name, which may have been a legal requirement. But it could be that Jean-François is also a civil name, since some early Brothers kept their baptismal names. In 1694, when the twelve Brothers made perpetual vows, they signed their civil names, but the list of those making perpetual vows from 1695 to 1705 includes the religious name as well as the civil name. The civil names may have been used in order to establish some legal status for their association.

There is really no clear information about when a Brother took or was given a new name in place of his civil name—when entering the novitiate, receiving the robe, or making vows.

No death certificate for a person named Jean-François has been discovered. The burial certificate of Côme Boiserins is signed by the pastor of Saint Symphorien and by De La Salle. Côme was nineteen years old and a native of Le Mans, a city about 115 miles east-south-east of Paris and therefore about 200 miles from Reims. Because Côme was not a native of Reims, Brother Maurice Hermans<sup>14</sup> does not agree with Aroz that he can be identified with Jean-François but claims that Côme was another Brother. Blain, however, does not say that Jean-François was a native of Reims, only that he had a good job in Reims.

Aroz gives the names of other Brothers among those who were the first to die:

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10. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 4, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 250.

11. Ibid., p. 252.

12. Bernard, Cahiers lasalliens 4, p. 64; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 318.

13. Cahiers lasalliens 37, p. 41, note 2.

14. *Lasalliana*, 12–A–52.

- ◆ Jean Lozart, age twenty-five, died 26 June 1685.
- ◆ An anonymous Brother died on 30 September 1685<sup>15</sup> and is considered a Brother because the death certificate states that he lived with De La Salle, presumably in the house on the rue Neuve.
- ◆ Nicolas Bourlette died 6 September 1686, though Blain in his description of Bourlette's death does not use the first name Nicolas but simply his family name, and the date 1685 is written on the *Obituary* document in the Generalate Archives. The date of 1686 is verified by the copy of his burial certificate, also in the Generalate Archives.<sup>16</sup>
- ◆ Maurice (Morice) died 1 May 1687, though the identity of this Maurice is not perfectly clear.

Calcutt considers that Jean-François and Côme Boiserins are two different people.<sup>17</sup> Gallego identifies Jean-François with the anonymous Brother who died on 30 September 1685.<sup>18</sup> This does not agree with Blain's statement that Jean-François was the first Brother to die, in 1684. The *Obituary* in the Generalate Archives also lists Jean-François as the first Brother to die. Gallego lists Christophe as the first Brother to die, the young man who may have been the fourteen-year-old who accompanied Nyel from Rouen to Reims in 1679.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to these deaths in Reims, two other Brothers are listed in the *Obituary* as having died in Paris: Brother Louis in 1688 and another Brother Nicolas, listed on the following line of the *Obituary* but without date. There is no other record of these two Brothers, who may have come to Paris with De La Salle in 1688 or shortly thereafter, yet these Brothers would very probably have been part of the community in the rue Neuve prior to 1688.

Another two Brothers, about whom some details of their lives will be given, were among the first in the community: Joseph Paris, described by Blain as "the first,"<sup>20</sup> and Henri L'Heureux, whom Maillefer says is "the first."<sup>21</sup>

In addition, there are the twelve Brothers who made perpetual vows in 1694, whose names on the formula are believed to be in the

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15. Cahiers lasalliens 37, p. 40, note 4.

16. Generalate Archives, Rome, 406/1, dos. 9.

17. Calcutt, *De La Salle, A City Saint*, p. 189.

18. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 178, note 107.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 203, note 84.

20. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 69.

21. Maillefer, Cahiers lasalliens 6, p. 99; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 80.

order of their entering the community. Blain says that six persevered until death,<sup>22</sup> and Gallego<sup>23</sup> suggests a possible seventh in the person of Brother Edme Leguillon, if he is the Brother Edme who died in Paris in 1711 (*Obituary*), though nothing else is known about him. A good deal can be told about some of the six: Gabriel Drolin, born in 1684; Antoine Partois, born in 1666; Jean-Henri, born in 1670; Jacques Compain, born in 1671 (presuming this is the Brother Jacques who died in Chartres in 1705); Jean Jacquot, born in 1672, and Michel A. Barthélemy Jacquinot, whose birthday is not known and who seems to have gone by the name Barthélemy.

Of the five who did not persevere, there is no sure record about them in the Institute after 1694, except for Nicolas Vuyart, whose story will be told; the other four are Gabriel-Charles Rasigade, Jean-Louis de Marcheville, Pierre Gilles, and Claude Roussel. Brother Gilles Beaudet, during his research in the Paris National Library, discovered the name of Gabriel-Charles Rasigade on the list of teachers approved for the parish schools of Paris for 1713.<sup>24</sup> It is probable that when Gabriel-Charles left the Institute, he continued in the work of Christian education, just as many former Brothers have done in modern times. Their training in the Institute has had a perduring value for the Church and for society.

Blain says that of the sixteen Brothers who were in the community when De La Salle went to Paris in 1688, eight left during that year because of the unrest created by the inexperienced Director.<sup>25</sup> Some of the eight who persevered could be among the twelve who took perpetual vows in 1694. Others among the twelve could be those not living in Reims but conducting the schools in Rethel, Laon, and Guise.

Counting, then, the seven who died during the period 1682 to 1688, the twelve who took vows in 1694, and adding Joseph Paris, Henri L'Heureux, and the eight who left the Institute while De La Salle was in Paris, the minimum number of Brothers who would have been a part of the community of the rue Neuve with De La Salle at one time or another during these six years was probably thirty. Of these we have considerable information about twelve. The lives of three of them—Gabriel Drolin, who died in 1733; Antoine Partois, who died in 1743, and Jean Jacquot, who died in 1759—because of their many years of service, stand out as the truly great men in the early years of the Institute. The stories of these three will be told in chapter three.

22. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 13, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 343.

23. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 537, note 46.

24. *Catalogue des maîtres, 1679–1721*, Rp 77.

25. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 10, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 312.

## About the Brothers Who Died at a Young Age

The background for the deaths of so many of the early Brothers is described by Blain in his detailed picture of the austerities which they practiced:

These men carried their mortifications almost to the same lengths as did those heroes of former times [the early saints of the desert and of the origins of religious orders]. In the seven or eight years from 1681 to 1688, when De La Salle left Reims to establish schools in Paris, he lost over six of the fifteen Brothers who composed the Institute at its beginning in the schools of Reims, Laon, Guise, and Rethel. All these men died a premature death before reaching the age of thirty. There were others whose health was ruined and who had to seek help outside the community. From 1688 up to De La Salle's own death in 1719, he had to deplore the death of at least forty-five more Brothers and experienced the joy of sending them on ahead of him into Paradise. Of these, only eight or nine were over thirty years old.<sup>26</sup>

### Brother Jean-François

Brother Jean-François was the first Brother to die, according to Blain. This Brother had a good job in Reims and was led to give it up to enter De La Salle's little community of teachers because he was impressed by the work and the spirit of De La Salle and his followers. He was so fervent in developing his spiritual life that he weakened his physical life and lasted only eighteen months. Bernard says that Jean-François died in the arms of De La Salle and that he was singing beautifully, yearning for heaven.<sup>27</sup>

Blain describes the death scene as if he were a witness; in fact, he undoubtedly had a description written for him or told to him by a witness; this would also be true of his account of the other early Brothers, because Blain was not in that close contact with the Brothers during these years, though he did witness De La Salle's early work in Paris.<sup>28</sup> Three of the early Brothers—Gabriel Drolin, Antoine Partois, and Jean Jacquot—were still living when Blain wrote his biography of

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26. *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 250.

27. Bernard, *Cahiers lasalliens* 4, p. 64; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 318.

28. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 6, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 281.

De La Salle more than forty years after the events he describes. One or more could have given Blain his information about the early Brothers. Of the death of Jean-François, Blain writes:

His delirium was like a sort of ecstasy during which his heart was filled only with a longing for heaven and with transports of love for God. He exclaimed, "O beautiful eternity! How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord! O love, love, love! We shall go to see love, love, love!" These words were constantly on his lips. He repeated them often, in a pleasant voice, with all the strength he had left, and he kept saying them until he died. His death was as saintly as his life had been.<sup>29</sup>

### Brother Nicolas Bourlette

It is not clear when Nicolas was first used as Bourlette's first name; it was not used by Bernard or Blain in their biographies of De La Salle. According to Blain, Brother [Nicolas] Bourlette was the second of the young Brothers to die as a "martyr of penance." Actually, Nicolas died on 6 September 1686, more than two years after Jean-François. Evidently inspired by the heroic life of De La Salle, he had joined the community in 1684, probably at the age of twenty-one. He was a native of Reims whose parents were among the well-to-do of that city. He joined without telling his parents, because he knew that they would not approve.

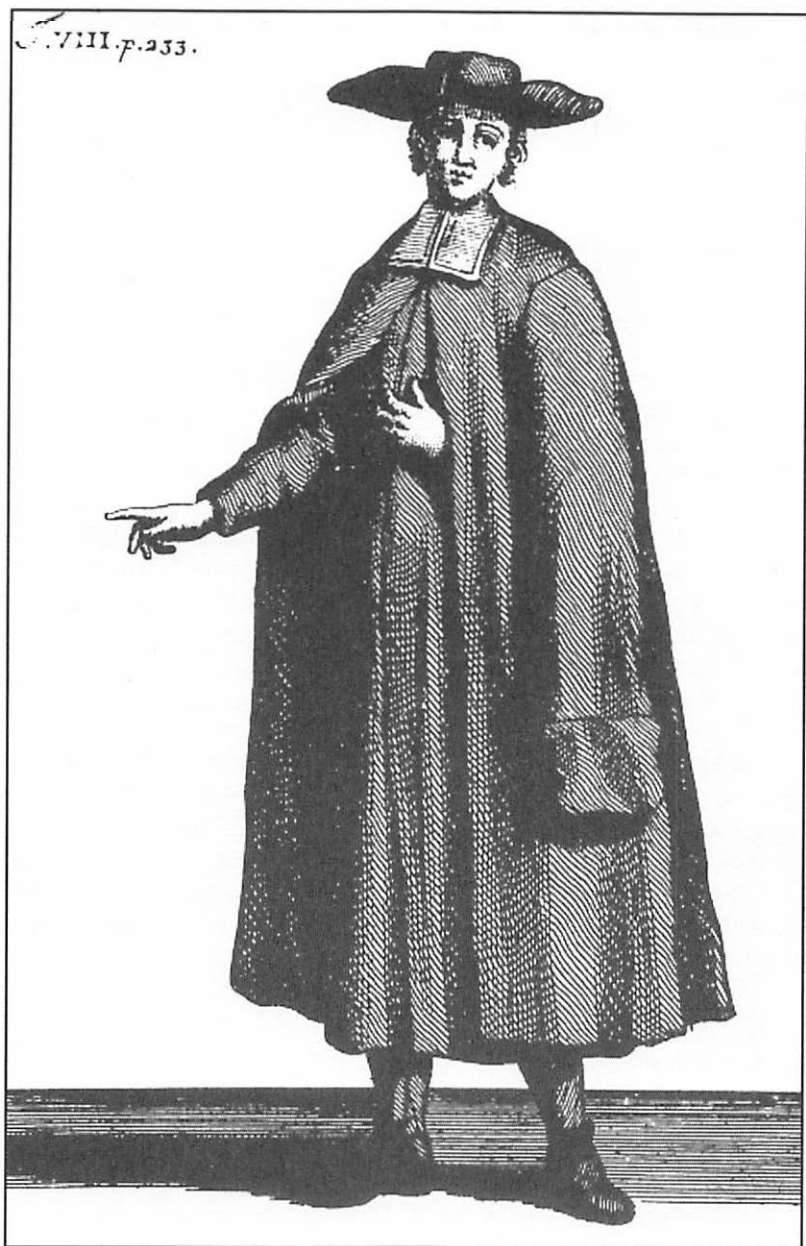
The rest of his story reads like a modern account of a young man joining a religious commune, suspected of having been brain-washed, and resisting the efforts of concerned parents to rescue him and bring him home. If we are to believe Blain, Nicolas was an enthusiast, entering into the new community with great fervor to lead a life of prayer, penance, and mortification. On more than one occasion, De La Salle had to be firm with Nicolas in order to keep him within the limits of prudence. For example, one time Nicolas wanted to dress up in a ridiculous red jacket, put on a wool cap, and run around the streets of Reims so that he would be looked upon as insane and treated with contempt.<sup>30</sup>

Nicolas's parents were heartbroken that their son had abandoned the family; they made repeated visits to the house on the rue Neuve

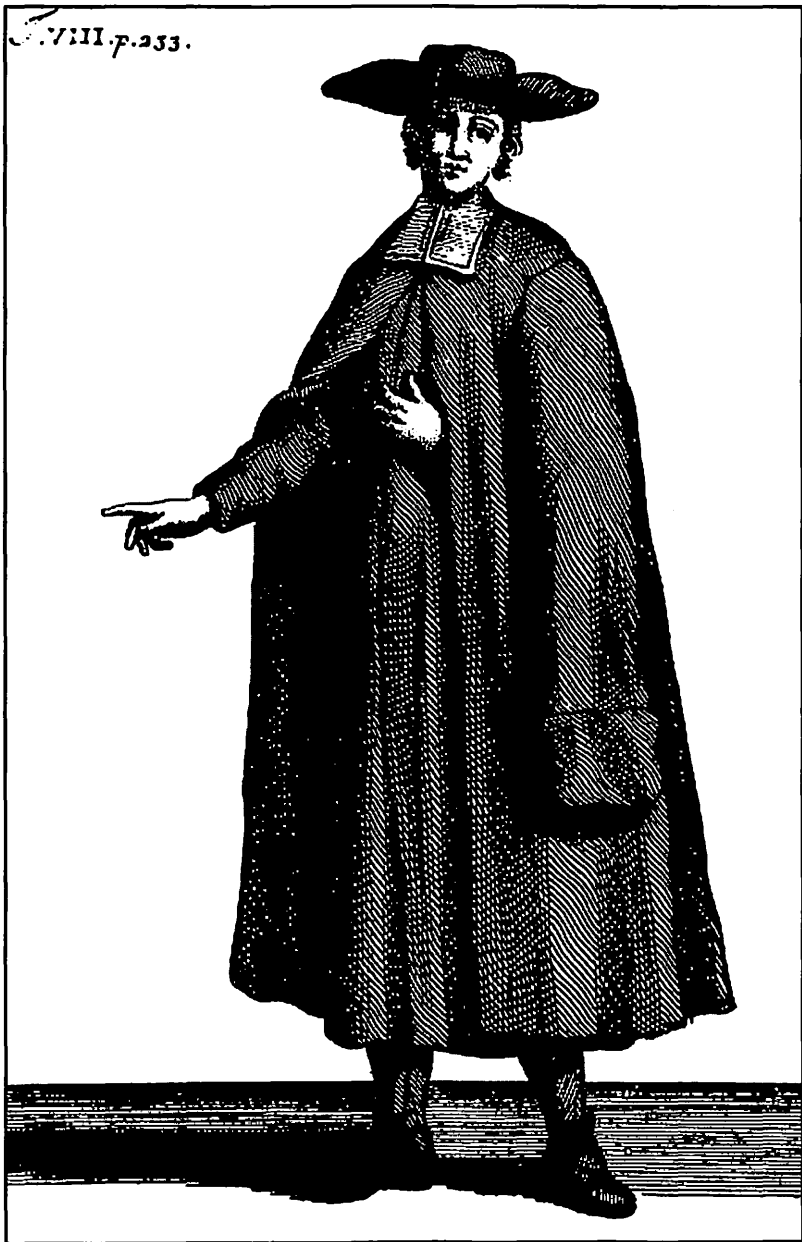
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29. *Ibid.*, chap. 4, p. 252.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 254.



The original habit of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, from P. Helyot, *Histoire des Ordres monastiques, religieux et militaires*, vol. 8, Paris, 1719. Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; *Iconographie*, 1979, slide 94, plate 40).



The original habit of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, from P. Helyot, *Histoire des Ordres monastiques, religieux et militaires*, vol. 8, Paris, 1719. Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; *Iconographie*, 1979, slide 94, plate 40).

to persuade their son to return home, but they were without success. When De La Salle moved Nicolas to Reims, possibly to protect him from his parents' efforts, they pursued their son even there. Nicolas wrote to De La Salle, "My parents came to see me and asked if I was not at last ready to be converted [to come home]. I told them I had already been converted [to life with the Brothers]."<sup>31</sup>

Blain suggests that Nicolas's assignment to Laon in 1685 might have been a further effort to conceal his whereabouts from the parents. The father, undaunted, lost no time in discovering where his son was and continued his unsuccessful efforts to persuade him to come home.

The extreme of Nicolas's fervor was soon put to the test when the Brother who conducted the school with him—Gabriel Drolin—became ill, and Nicolas proceeded to take charge of both classes, each with possibly a large number of pupils. The pastor, M. Pierre Guyart, a friend of De La Salle, questioned Nicolas about all he was trying to do. "Sir," he replied, "I keep my right foot in one class, my left in the other, my mind on the sick Brother, and my heart in heaven."<sup>32</sup> The considerate pastor recommended that the school be called off for a week or more, but Nicolas explained that according to the guidelines agreed on for the conduct of the schools, he could not do that without a written approval from De La Salle, who was on retreat at the time.

In fact, Nicolas soon followed where he said his heart was set, because when Gabriel was well enough to resume work, Nicolas became sick—and fatally so. He died within a year of his going to Laon. Blain says that the people of Laon had come to revere the young man as a saint. The record of his death certificate was witnessed by Gabriel on 6 September 1686. We can imagine the feelings of Nicolas's parents as well as those of De La Salle.

## Brother Maurice

The third Brother to die, according to Blain, was a Brother Maurice:

Brother Maurice, another native of Reims, was the third of De La Salle's sons to enjoy his reward in heaven. His happy death occurred in Reims on 1 May 1687. He was born of a very honorable

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31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, p. 255.

family, and he paid greater honor to his family by his piety than he had received from the family by his birth. No sooner had he joined the Brothers than they all looked upon him as their model. . . . De La Salle had a particular love for this perfectly obedient Brother, and he preferred to have him to serve his Mass. He served with so much modesty and piety that those present might have thought they were looking at an angel serving a seraph at the altar.<sup>33</sup>

Maurice wore himself out, like the other two, with his austere and mortified life together with his work in the classroom. He developed tuberculosis and became weak. The doctor of the community, Dubois, recommended that Maurice and another Brother suffering from the same illness return home if they wished to recover. Maurice chose to remain and died six months later. The other Brother decided to return home, but within three months he also died, "filled with bitter remorse," wrote Blain, "for having abandoned the land of the saints."<sup>34</sup>

Aroz<sup>35</sup> identifies this Brother Maurice with a Jean Morice whose death certificate indicates that he died on 1 May 1687. The coincidence of the two dates of death is enough to overlook the different spelling of the name, a variance common at the time; about the difference in age (Blain says twenty-two; the certificate says "seventeen or about that age"), Hermans states, "At that time parish records did not try hard to be exact about the age of the deceased when the place of birth was different than that of death."<sup>36</sup> The death certificate states that Morice was a native of Chesne-Le-Pouileux, which is in the diocese of Reims. It is signed by Brother Henri L'Heureux, apparently in the absence of De La Salle, which indicates the position Henri held in the community at that time. Actually Henri signed it twice, once for the pastor, who was unable to be present, and once as witness.<sup>37</sup>

Hermans, in the same article, says that it cannot be certain that Jean Morice is the same person as Brother Jean-Maurice; he suggests that Jean Morice may have been a member of the group in the training program for teachers.

Bernard<sup>38</sup> says that a fourth Brother died "sometime" after the Brother who died on 1 May. Aroz identifies the "fourth Brother" as

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33. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

35. *Cahiers lasalliens* 37, p. 41, note 4.

36. *Lasalliana*, 12-A-52.

37. *Cahiers lasalliens* 37, p. 40.

38. Bernard, *Cahiers lasalliens* 4, p. 64; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 318.

Brother Joseph, but there is a problem with that because this Brother Joseph died eleven years later, on 13 May 1698.<sup>39</sup>

Bernard gives the name Bourlette but not the names of the three others he mentions as having died early in the history of the community. It seems that the four who died within a period of about three years were Jean-François, 1684; Jean Lozart, 1685, a native of Paris<sup>40</sup> about whom no other details are known; Nicolas Bourlette, 1686, and Maurice, 1687—all under the age of thirty.

The early death of so many young Brothers raises a question about the prudence of De La Salle in his care for them. Later on, he did mitigate the practices of austerity among the Brothers, because of pressures from certain members of the clergy. They told De La Salle that he encouraged the practice of too much austerity for men who had quite an austere life as it was, working long hours in poorly ventilated and crowded classrooms.

Blain states that De La Salle took great care of the Brothers who were ill.<sup>41</sup> Judging from the history of the Founder's relationship with his followers, it is not hard to accept this. Lucard<sup>42</sup> tells how, when the Brothers became ill again in Laon, De La Salle followed the doctor's advice and closed the schools for two months, bringing the two Brothers back to Reims for recuperation.

There must have been a tension between De La Salle's practice of kindness and the rigor of his spirituality, a characteristic of the time and part of his Sulpician training. Consider this passage in his meditation for the Brothers on the topic of how we ought to love God:

Should you not, then, offer your life willingly to God and sacrifice it to him to preserve his holy love or increase it in you. . . ?

It is truly to sacrifice your life for God, to spend it only for him. This is what you can do in your profession and in your work, not being concerned whether you die in a few years, provided you save yourself and win souls for God.<sup>43</sup>

Also, in the meditations he wrote for the time of retreat, De La Salle twice tells the Brothers that they ought to be willing to lay down their lives for their pupils, so great is their love for them.<sup>44</sup>

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39. Cahiers lasalliens 37, p. 41, note 4.

40. Ibid., p. 41.

41. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 4, Cahiers lasalliens 7, pp. 256, 258.

42. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 1, p. 99.

43. *Meditations*, 70.2.

44. Ibid., 198.2 and 201.1.

## About the Brothers Who Survived the Early Years

Nine early Brothers already mentioned did not die early deaths, and there are some records of their lives: Joseph Paris, Henri L'Heureux, Nicolas Vuyart, Jacques Compain, Michel A. Barthélemy Jacquinet, and Jean-Henri (described in this present chapter) and Antoine Par-tois, Jean Jacquot, and Gabriel Drolin (related in chapter three).

### Brother Joseph Paris

Canon Blain thought so much of this Brother that he wrote a summary biography (*Abrégé*) of him as part of a supplement to his life of De La Salle. He begins by saying that Jean Paris, later called Brother Joseph, was the first to join De La Salle in the new community, adding that it was about the time that De La Salle was giving up his canonry, which would be in August 1683. This was the community of the rue Neuve, and Joseph may have been the first to enter after De La Salle moved there in June 1682.

Blain speaks of Joseph as an elderly man when he joined, subject to asthma and general ill health. He was, however, able to do tailoring and to make wine for the community. De La Salle must also have given him some training as a teacher, for in 1686 he was sent to the school in Laon.

In 1691 De La Salle asked all the Brothers to come to Vaugirard in Paris for a retreat. The Founder actually directed the Brothers of Reims, Rethel, Laon, and Guise to meet at the Inn of the White Swan near Soissons and to proceed together from there to Paris.<sup>45</sup> For some, this was quite an ordeal of walking, probably averaging more than eighty miles. Joseph made the first part of the journey on foot from Laon to the gathering place for the Brothers outside Soissons, a distance of about twenty miles. This was so taxing on him because of his poor health and a painful growth on his knee that the other Brothers arranged for him to make the next leg of the journey by boat on the Aisne and Oise Rivers as far as Beaumont, a distance of another forty miles. There was still another twenty miles or so from Beaumont to Vaugirard in Paris. Such was Joseph's problem on the journey that when the month's retreat was over, De La Salle made sure he went back to Laon "by an easier method" of travel, probably by coach.

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45. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 70.

Three years later, in 1694, Joseph met death in a bizarre fashion as a martyr of the classroom. One of his older pupils, whether out of sheer malice or anger for being punished, placed an open penknife on the teacher's chair. When Joseph sat down, the blade pierced him to the bone, and the wound proved fatal. He died in a few days.

Blain speaks at some length about Joseph's piety, his prayerfulness, and his courage in suffering because of his poor health and the growth on his knee. The people of Laon also honored him, and he was buried next to another Brother whom they revered, Nicolas Bourlette, who had died eight years earlier, in 1686.

### Brother Henri L'Heureux

When Maillefer says that Henri was the first of the Brothers to commit himself to De La Salle,<sup>46</sup> this may indicate that Henri was a member of the community on the rue Sainte Marguerite and one of the two or three who remained faithful when others abandoned the Founder. If so, it would reconcile Maillefer's claim for Henri with the claim made by Blain for Brother Joseph Paris, the latter being the first to join the group in the house on the rue Neuve. Henri may well have entered the community in 1681 or early in 1682. Blain says he was only twenty-four in 1686, so he would have been only twenty or twenty-one when he joined De La Salle. The fact that he kept his baptismal and family name would also suggest that he joined before the practice of adopting a new name as a Brother.

Brother Henri was evidently gifted in many ways. Maillefer says that De La Salle saw in him an uncommon virtue, keenness of mind, affable manners, and a real talent for expressing himself.<sup>47</sup> He must have shown talent as a teacher in one or more of the three schools in Reims. He was surely part of the assembly in the Easter season of 1686, when De La Salle led the Brothers in drawing up tentative regulations for their life in community and work in the schools. It was probably on this occasion that the Brothers and De La Salle made a vow of obedience for the first time; it was a vow for one year.

It was probably that year, too, or the next, when De La Salle proposed that they elect one of their own as Superior. Although the Brothers were surprised by this proposal and at first resisted it, they eventually acceded to De La Salle and undertook an election. Brother

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46. Maillefer, *Cahiers lasalliens* 6, p. 99; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 80.

47. *Ibid.*

Henri was their choice, a decision that pleased De La Salle. His satisfaction did not last long, however. When his ecclesiastical superiors heard that De La Salle was practicing obedience to one of the Brothers, they immediately ordered him to resume his role as Superior. None was more relieved than Henri.

When the Founder went on retreat a short time later, he put Henri in charge of the whole Reims community. It was during this time that Henri represented the community at the death of Jean Morice. It was probably also during this time that as acting Superior, he presided at whatever ceremony may have been held when one of the junior novices, Jean-Henri, received the Brothers' habit.

When De La Salle moved to Paris in 1688, he placed Henri in charge of the community, possibly also in charge of the program for training teachers, though this is not certain. More will be said about this when the story of Nicolas Vuyart is told. De La Salle had also assigned Henri to prepare for the priesthood so that he would be able to succeed him as Superior. He himself taught Henri some Latin in preparation for the courses he would follow in philosophy and theology in the school of the Canons Regular of Saint Denis in Reims.<sup>48</sup> As a student, Henri was prudent, wise, good hearted, adequately knowledgeable, zealous, and full of the spirit of his vocation.<sup>49</sup> Blain says:

He was admired in the schools of the Canons Regular of Saint Denis in Reims; when questioned or when someone discussed a subject with him, he seemed at first to be lost in thought. His words were slow coming, and he seemed to delay his answer, so that his companions became impatient and made some fun of him, sometimes calling him the big ox. But once he spoke, he did so with such ease and so correctly that they had to consider the one they called an ox to be, in fact, an eagle.<sup>50</sup>

De La Salle brought Henri to Paris sometime in 1690, in order to have him complete his studies at the Sorbonne and be ordained. Unfortunately, within a year Henri died quite suddenly while the Founder was in Reims. He had been alerted that Henri had fallen ill, but before he was able to return to Paris, Henri had been buried two days. This was one occasion when the Brothers saw their Founder break down and cry. It took him many moments of prayer to recover his composure.

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48. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

49. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 6, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 271.

50. *Ibid.*, chap. 9, p. 310.

The tragedy had a profound effect on De La Salle. He resolved not to have anyone else prepare for the priesthood with a view to becoming Superior of the Institute. Three years later, after the Brothers had refused to elect a Brother to take De La Salle's place as Superior, he insisted that they sign a pledge that "no one shall be received among us or chosen as Superior who is a priest or who has received Holy Orders."<sup>51</sup> Brother Henri L'Heureux, though a member of the Institute for no more than ten years, is remembered as a fine Brother who by the fate of his death contributed to the permanent lay character of the Brothers' Institute.

### Brother Nicolas Vuyart

Nicolas Vuyart was one of the first Brothers to join De La Salle. The fact that like Henri L'Heureux and Gabriel Drolin, he kept his baptismal and family name, not taking another religious name as later members did, gives some evidence of this early entry into De La Salle's community. Also the vow formula of 1694 seems to list the names of those making the vows in the order of their entry into the Institute; Nicolas is first on that list. He probably was one of the teachers who lived with De La Salle in the house on the rue Sainte Marguerite, one of the two or three (probably with Henri L'Heureux) who stayed with the Founder when all the others left.

There is evidence that Nicolas was especially skilled as a teacher. He was undoubtedly one of the principal Brothers to work with De La Salle on the development of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, the teacher's classroom manual for the uniform operation of the schools.<sup>52</sup> As early as 1683, he was chosen by De La Salle to conduct the school in Rethel;<sup>53</sup> it was at that time that De La Salle made an agreement with Canon Remy Favart to have teachers prepared for rural parishes as part of the operation of the school Nicolas was conducting.<sup>54</sup> The school had two classes taught by a teacher in training and supervised by Brother Nicolas and the Brother who lived and worked with Nicolas in the Rethel community and school. During the school year of 1686–1687, this teacher-training program was moved to

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51. Ibid.

52. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 78, note 3.

53. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes*, 1, p. 16; Cahiers lasalliens 37, p. 26.

54. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 1, p. 688.

Reims, possibly under the direction of Vuyart, though this is not clear;<sup>55</sup> Hermans seems to cite other sources that indicate that Vuyart was in Rethel until 1695.<sup>56</sup>

Nicolas, however, is cited in Paris with Brother Bernard (Legentil) in 1690 with the opening of the school on the rue du Bac.<sup>57</sup> This is learned from the litigation begun by the writing masters in which De La Salle, the two Brothers, and Jeanne Quesmont, the woman who owned the house, were defendants. It was on this occasion that De La Salle intervened to argue the case when the Brothers seemed to falter; the result was a decision in favor of De La Salle.<sup>58</sup>

The Founder's regard for Nicolas is revealed in the selection De La Salle made of him, along with Gabriel Drolin, to make a special vow of association on 21 November 1691, in which the three promised to work for the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools, even if they were the only three left and they had to beg for alms and live on bread alone. It was a most critical time for the Institute, when the Brothers were probably reduced to about a dozen and many of them were tired and discouraged. Nicolas was one on whom De La Salle felt he could count at such a time.

There is a record of his being the Director "of the gratuitous schools for boys" in Reims in 1693.<sup>59</sup> Nicolas was chosen again for the task of training teachers for rural parishes in 1699; De La Salle had been asked by the pastor of Saint Hippolyte to staff a school and a training program in the school which was located in the neighboring parish of Saint Martin in the Faubourg Saint Marcel in Paris. A Brother Gervais was assigned to work and live with Nicolas.

One instance of the success of this work by Nicolas was the request made of De La Salle by the Superior of the Sulpicians, Père François Leschassier, to have a teacher trained for one of the Sulpician schools in Canada. It was Nicolas who supervised this training of the candidate, Antoine Forget, during the school year 1700–1701, from October to April.<sup>60</sup> Forget was well trained and thoroughly committed to the Lasallian pedagogy, even to the point of resisting other directives from his Superior, Leschassier.<sup>61</sup>

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55. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 209.

56. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

57. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 93.

58. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 8, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 298; Maillefer, Cahiers lasalliens 6, p. 91; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 73.

59. Cahiers lasalliens 26, p. 297.

60. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 342; Cahiers lasalliens 42, p. 314.

Another example of the good work done by Nicolas in this training school for teachers is mentioned in the letter written to Brother Barthélemy by the Superior of the Seminary of Saint Nicolas du Charbonnet after the death of De La Salle:

For myself and all of my country, we are eternally indebted to [M. de La Salle]. He had the charity to educate in the Faubourg Saint Marcel four young men for the schools; they were graduated by him so well trained and so zealous that if they had found rural priests who cultivated the good qualities which had been given them, they would have built up a community most useful to the province. One became a priest, and he teaches the humanities to the young with edification, despite attacks which they have frequently suffered from the town officials, and even sometimes from pastors and other representatives of the Church.<sup>62</sup>

In 1704 Nicolas was condemned along with the other Brothers in Paris in the trial initiated by the “syndicate and community” of the writing masters. Despite efforts by the pastors of Saint Hippolyte and Saint Martin to make a separate case for the two Brothers, Nicolas and Gervais, claiming they were independent of De La Salle and the Brothers, the court affirmed the original condemnation of these Brothers as part of De La Salle’s community.

Nicolas may have been influenced by this tack of the pastors of Saint Hippolyte and Saint Martin to consider becoming independent of De La Salle in order to continue the school and the training program. He had already been willed funds for the school by the original pastor, M. Michel Lebreton, who hoped this way to guarantee the survival of the teacher-training program. Nicolas decided, then, to leave the Institute so that he could continue the work. He has been accused of avarice, but actually the money he received in the will was restricted to the intention of M. Lebreton: the school and program in his parish. Unfortunately, Nicolas’s leaving the Brothers led to the withdrawal by a friend of M. Lebreton of financial assistance for the upkeep of the teachers in training. Besides, Gervais decided not to stay with Nicolas; Blain says that Nicolas actually drove Gervais away.<sup>63</sup> Most writers say Gervais stayed in the Institute; Gallego<sup>64</sup> questions whether he did, arguing that this Gervais is confused with another who did persevere, whose story will be told later.

61. Poutet, *Ibid.*

62. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 18, *Cahiers lasalliens* 8, pp. 179–180.

63. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 15, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 366.

64. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 377, note 138.

So the teacher training program was discontinued, but Nicolas did continue the parish school for another fourteen years until his death in 1719.<sup>65</sup> Both Maillefer<sup>66</sup> and Blain<sup>67</sup> report that Nicolas at some point later asked De La Salle to be readmitted to the Institute and that De La Salle welcomed him with open arms and “would have received him back into the house with great joy, if the advice of wise and prudent persons [possibly Brothers], fearful of the effect this would have [on young Brothers?], had not dissuaded him from doing so.”<sup>68</sup>

How sad it must have been for the Founder to turn away this original member of his community, one with whom he and Gabriel Drolin had made that heroic vow in 1691. It is perhaps significant that in De La Salle’s letter to Gabriel in April 1705, he calls Nicolas a Brother, when he remarks that “I am quite sure that you have no intention of following the example of Brother Nicolas.”<sup>69</sup>

Blain says that Nicolas took sick the day after De La Salle died, and “the holy man, who died on Good Friday in the year 1719, seemed on the next day to ask heaven for revenge of a crime which he had from his good heart pardoned during his lifetime.”<sup>70</sup> Fortunately, this wild speculation by Blain was not regarded as relevant in the examination of the heroic virtues of the Founder.

## Brother Jacques Compain

Jacques Compain was one of the twelve Brothers who made perpetual vows with De La Salle on 6 June 1694. It is not known when he entered the Institute, but it can be presumed that since he was elected by De La Salle for this first group to make these vows, he was regarded as a solid member of the community and one who had experienced the close guidance of the Founder in the rue Neuve community. Little is known of his career as a Brother. He could have been the Director in one of the communities outside of Reims in 1688.<sup>71</sup>

There is clear evidence that he was in Paris in 1704, because he is on the list of the Brothers banned by the court in the trial brought

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65. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 105.

66. Maillefer, *Cahiers lasalliens* 6, p. 154; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 118.

67. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 15, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 367.

68. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 37, note 77; Rigault, *Histoire générale de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétienues*, 1, p. 237.

69. *Letters*, 17.12.

70. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 15, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 367.

71. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 272.

on by the writing masters. In that year also, on 5 July 1704, he was one of four Brothers (with Ponce Thiseux, Antoine Partois, and Joseph Le Roux) to sign a lease for the house on the rue Princesse. They probably signed because they were living in the house at the time, while De La Salle was living in the community on the rue de Charonne. The lease was for three years at a cost of 680 livres per year, payable quarterly; it was a renewal of a previous lease signed by De La Salle. In part it reads:

The first payment is due on Christmas; the tenants are responsible to keep the house in good condition, including all minor repairs, and to pay for major repairs if they are acceptable; to pay M. Guillemart [the landlord] the annual tax for street cleaning and lamps, for which he is charged; the tenants will not be charged for the boarding of soldiers, who will be at the expense of the landlord; without the landlord's consent the tenants will not be able to transfer their right to the present lease, and they will provide for him as free gifts whatever expenses they incur [in the upkeep of the building]; the tenants are responsible for the security of the house against wind and water, according to custom; both parties agree to give six months' notice of the intention to discontinue the lease, and [the tenants] agree not to remain for any time beyond the expiration of such notice or of the lease itself.<sup>72</sup>

Brother Jacques met his death in Chartres along with four other Brothers in the community as a result of the purple fever (typhus) epidemic. De La Salle mentions the names of two of these Brothers, Michel and Jacques, in his letter of 28 August 1705 to Gabriel Drolin, asking Gabriel to pray for them.<sup>73</sup> It is probable that De La Salle gives these names because they were known to Gabriel.

The Brother Michel who died at that time had been the Director of Novices in Paris from 1699 to 1702, and it was he who was responsible, because of his harsh treatment of the young Brothers, for the intervention of M. de La Chétardie, the pastor of Saint Sulpice, in whose parish schools the Brothers were teaching. This resulted in the appointment by the cardinal of an ecclesiastical superior to replace De La Salle. Gabriel would certainly have remembered that. More will be said about Brother Michel. Blain describes the four Brothers who died in this tragedy:

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72. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 133; *Cahiers lasalliens* 42, pp. 290–295.

73. *Letters*, 183.

For the good of the public, [the Founder] sacrificed four of his principal disciples, who were cut down by the purple fever within six months. The first [Germain] was a novice of great virtue. The second was an older Brother [Lazare], an excellent penman, a very gifted teacher, and, what alone deserves praise, a true disciple of De La Salle, full of his spirit and the grace of his vocation. The third, who had been Director of Novices, was a man very hard on himself and a great lover of mortification [Brother Michel]. The fourth was the infirmarian in Paris, whom the kind Father had sent to his children to assist them in their illness. But his precious death, which was the proof of his obedience, was the reward of his charity.<sup>74</sup>

This fourth Brother has been identified as a Brother Jean-Chrysostome, but nothing else is known about him, and there is little or no basis for this identification.<sup>75</sup> Félix-Paul<sup>76</sup> identifies the four Brothers from the death certificates of Chartres and gives the dates of their deaths and their ages, all in 1705: Nicolas Falon (Germain), on 1 January, age twenty-one; Michel Loyson (Lazare), on 16 January, age thirty-four; Jacques Lequeasse, or Lucquet (Michel), on 27 May, age twenty-nine, and Jacques Compain, 2 July, age thirty-four. Again it is clear how young most of the Brothers were when they died.

Félix-Paul identifies another Brother who died during this epidemic, a Brother Quentin. He died on 11 February 1707 at the age of thirty-two.<sup>77</sup>

## Brother Michel A. Barthélemy Jacquinet

This Brother, also one of the twelve who made perpetual vows in 1694, was probably called Barthélemy, according to Gallego,<sup>78</sup> because another Brother Michel had preceded him in the Institute. Little is known of this Brother Barthélemy. The vow formula of 1694 has an incomplete note on the upper right hand corner, made incomplete by the trimming of the page by the binder's cutting off the edge of the paper.<sup>79</sup> The note consists of a mark in the form of a cross and the

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74. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 15, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 379.

75. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 306, note 18.

76. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 88.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

78. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 321, note 112.

79. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 9, note 2.

two words, *est mo[rt]* [died]. Ordinarily the date of the death would follow. He probably died in 1702 or earlier, since on 10 February 1703 the name Barthélemy was given to Joseph Truffet, future Superior. It is clear that an effort was made to avoid giving the same name to two different Brothers.

There is no record of any assignments given to Barthélemy Jacquinot before his death. It is the judgment of Hermans and others<sup>80</sup> that the major portion of each of the thirteen vow formulas of 1694 is in the handwriting of this Brother.

### Brother Jean-Henri

This Brother is one of the six whose summary biography is printed as a supplement to the life of De La Salle written by Canon Blain. Jean-Henri was a native of the diocese of Reims and entered the community on the rue Neuve in 1686 at the age of fifteen, joining the boys who formed the junior novitiate under De La Salle's direction. Two years later, he was given the habit by Brother Henri L'Heureux.

Though quite young, Jean-Henri possessed a high degree of assiduity in the practice of the virtues cultivated in the community, especially obedience, prayer, and mortification. He was looked upon, according to Blain, as a model for the other new members to such a degree that when, in 1690, De La Salle called Henri L'Heureux to Paris for study at the Sorbonne and ordination, Jean-Henri was appointed the Director of the community on the rue Neuve.

He was only nineteen years old when he was given such a serious responsibility, although it is quite possible that the community had been considerably reduced by that time. The teacher-training program had probably been discontinued, or greatly reduced, since a sufficient number of teachers needed by the pastors in the rural parishes had already been trained. The junior novices would be taken to Paris by De La Salle very shortly, if not already. What remained were the Brothers teaching in the three schools in Reims, probably no more than a dozen. If Blain is correct, there were not many others in the community, for he speaks of eight Brothers leaving and only one new one entering during this period.<sup>81</sup>

Blain describes Jean-Henri as lacking confidence or being too humble to express his thoughts, so much so that at the time for giving

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80. *Ibid.*, p. 7, note 2.

81. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 10, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 312.

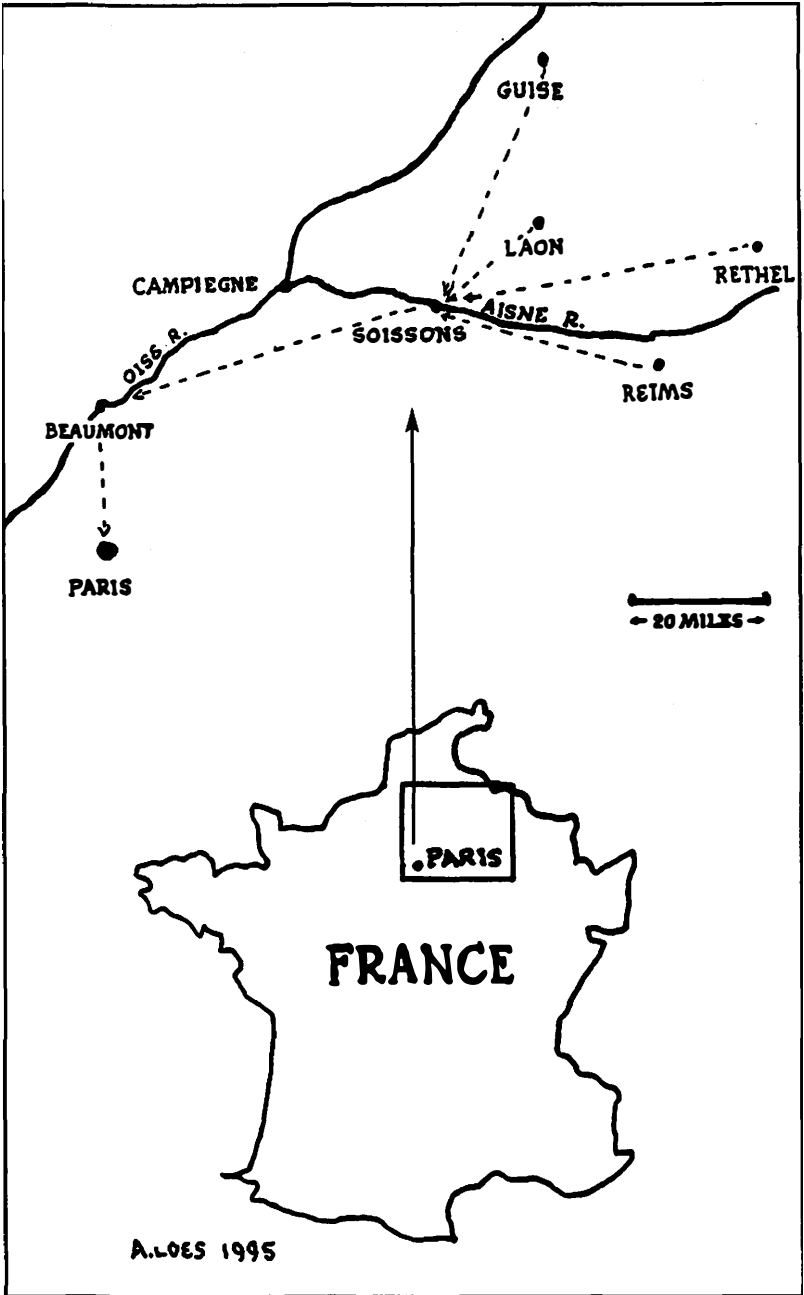
the customary discourse or exhortation to the community once or twice a week, he would read from a spiritual book. Still, Blain says that this practice was much appreciated by the Brothers, because of the fervor of Jean-Henri's few comments and the power of his example. He was also respected for his complete loyalty to the directives and the spirit of De La Salle.

In 1691, when De La Salle called all the Brothers to a retreat at Vaugirard, near Paris, Jean-Henri took to the road, on foot like all the others. Surprisingly, though only twenty-three years old, he suffered severely from sciatica, which made walking painful. He also had, like Brother Joseph Paris, a large growth on his knee which made walking very difficult. By the time he had covered the thirty miles from Reims to Soissons, where the Brothers from the other communities (Guise, Rethel, and Laon) were to meet, both he and the Brothers helping him were exhausted. They still had another fifty-five miles to go.

After the rest at the inn outside Soissons, Jean-Henri seemed so keen on completing the journey on foot that the Brothers did not insist on his taking the boat with Brother Joseph. They were rather quickly disillusioned after walking another eight or nine miles. It is difficult to imagine how the rest of the journey was completed, with Jean-Henri walking with such extreme difficulty that the Brothers had to take turns practically carrying him for almost another fifty miles! When they got to the edge of Paris, they were able to engage a man to carry Jean-Henri and two or three other exhausted Brothers the rest of the way to Vaugirard in a small cart. Blain says that at the sight of these poor men in their black robes—and probably tricorner hats—being pulled along in the cart, the bystanders gave vent to hoots and ridicule. For Blain it was a problem to decide which deserved more praise, the courage of the invalid or the charity of his companions.

After viewing the results of this experience, De La Salle had second thoughts about the rule of everyone's always traveling on foot. He made it clear that the Brothers should take a horse or a coach when their physical condition made it a hardship to travel on foot.

After the retreat, Jean-Henri returned to Reims as Director until he was called to Paris in 1698 to be the Director of Novices in the new novitiate house of the *Grande Maison*. Here he continued to be the model he had been in Reims. In particular, he had a special gift of prayer. Blain says that he became so absorbed in contemplation that De La Salle would give him a number of jobs to do in order to take him out of himself. All to no avail, because Jean-Henri had found the secret of being as completely recollected in the midst of all exterior activities as he was at the foot of the crucifix. An example of his high



The journey of the communities to Vaugirard in Paris for the retreat in 1691.

level of spirituality was a vision he must have disclosed to De La Salle of a nun, former resident in the *Grande Maison*, suffering in purgatory. This seems to be the only incident of such phenomena in the Founder's life.

Blain adds that Brother Jean-Henri was practically impeccable, and he had to bring up vague, general, or trifling faults against himself at the daily practice of accusation before De La Salle. The Founder, nevertheless, would impose rather severe penances on him in accord with the spirituality of the times, as he judged proper for this particular Brother. Often it would result in Jean-Henri's coming so late for his meals—though this did not seem to be the Founder's intention—that he would get little or nothing to eat.

De La Salle thought so much of this Brother that he would leave him in charge of the community when he had to be absent. It is possible that to represent the Founder, Jean-Henri went to Reims in 1698 to witness the burial of Brother Joseph on 13 May. It is also possible that Jean-Henri was still in Reims at this time and that he had not yet come to Paris.

In 1699, when Jean-Henri was dying, De La Salle had all the Brothers come to the infirmary before the period of morning prayer. Perhaps at the Founder's request, the dying Brother spoke to the community, and he did so with such fervor for almost half an hour that when the Brothers returned to the chapel, De La Salle told them there was no need to read a topic for their meditation. Later, he wrote to all the Brothers, "Pray for Brother Henri, who died with sentiments of extraordinary piety on the first of July 1699."<sup>82</sup>

Jean-Henri died at the age of twenty-eight. It is difficult not to think that his early death was related to the intensity with which he seems to have lived such a penitential life with little regard for his physical needs. Such was the spirituality of the times, however; such, too, was the enthusiasm inspired by De La Salle in his followers.

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82. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 76.

# Chapter Three

## Giants Among the Earliest Brothers

A separate chapter seems appropriate for three Brothers who began work with De La Salle in the community of the rue Neuve. They worked faithfully with the Founder all during his life and persevered decades after him as the elders of the growing Institute. These Brothers are Antoine Partois, Jean Jacquot, and Gabriel Drolin.

### Brother Antoine Partois

Jean Partois was born on 20 October 1666 in Saint-Loup-en-Champagne, near Rethel, in the district of Château-Porcien and the diocese of Reims. Jean joined the community on the rue Neuve in September 1686 and was given the name Antoine to distinguish him from Jean Jacquot, although Jacquot entered a month after Partois.<sup>1</sup>

There is no record of Antoine's early assignments, which could have included any of the three schools in Reims or the other schools in the outlying towns of Rethel, Guise, Laon, and Château-Porcien. He was not one of the two Brothers that De La Salle took with him to Paris to staff the school on the rue Princesse in 1688, because both of these Brothers eventually left the Institute.

Antoine, however, would certainly have been in the house at Vaugirard in Paris for the retreat in October 1691. De La Salle had arranged to have some of the schoolteachers he had trained for the country parishes substitute for the Brothers, so they could make this retreat and obtain much needed physical rest and spiritual renewal.

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1. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

After the retreat, Antoine was in the community at Laon, for a receipt was signed there by him on 22 July 1692.<sup>2</sup> Brother Joseph Le Roux, whose story will be told later, was the Director.<sup>3</sup>

In 1694 Antoine was chosen by De La Salle to be one of the twelve on retreat at Vaugirard to make perpetual vows. His name is third on the list of the vow formulas, following Nicolas Vuyart and Gabriel Drolin. It is known that Gabriel entered the Institute in 1684 and Antoine in 1686; this lends itself to the supposition that the order of the names on this vow formula is according to the date of their entering the Institute.

In 1698, when De La Salle moved from Vaugirard to the *Grande Maison* in Paris, there were five communities and about twenty-four Brothers conducting nine schools: three in Reims, three in Paris, and one each in Rethel, Guise, and Laon.<sup>4</sup> Antoine seems at this time to be functioning as secretary for De La Salle. One work of writing attributed to him is a copy of the Rule dated 23 September 1705,<sup>5</sup> but Hermans questions this.<sup>6</sup>

There is a record that Antoine was again in Laon, as Director, in 1701 and 1702.<sup>7</sup> In 1704 Antoine was one of seventeen or eighteen Brothers (research differs on the number and the exact names) indicted by the court in Paris along with De La Salle in the suit brought by the “syndicate and community of the writing masters.”<sup>8</sup> It is clear, then, that Antoine had been teaching in one of the four schools in Paris. In July 1704 Antoine was one of the Brothers who signed a three-year lease on the house in the rue Princesse with three other Brothers, Ponce, Jacques, and Joseph, which means that he was living there and teaching in that school.

When the Brothers were forbidden by the court to teach in Paris, De La Salle assigned them to other cities. Antoine and Barnabé were chosen by De La Salle in 1705 to open classes for the parishes of Saint Philibert and Saint Pierre in Dijon.<sup>9</sup> The certificate of approval from

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2. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 246, note 2; Cahiers lasalliens 40/2, p. 79.

3. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

4. Cahiers lasalliens 5, p. 245.

5. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 142, note 1.

6. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 8.

7. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

8. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 163; Cahiers lasalliens 40/2, p. 71; Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 102; Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 375.

9. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 178.

the pastor of Saint Philibert reads as follows (M. Maigret, pastor of Saint Pierre, provided a similar certificate):

I, the undersigned, pastor of Saint Philibert of Dijon and vicar [*promoteur*] for the bishopric of Langres, certify that Brothers Antoine and Barnabé of the Christian Schools and Institute of M. de La Salle, established in the rue Princesse in Paris, are of worthy life and good behavior, and very holy doctrine. In faith of this, I have given them this present certificate for their qualification and to serve for any other purpose. Done in Dijon, 12 May 1705. Du Chailoux, Pastor of Saint Philibert.<sup>10</sup>

These classes were the admirable project of Claude Rigoley, Secretary for the States of Bourgogne, who provided 200 livres annual subsidy for each Brother and secured the patronage and protection of François-Louis de Clérmont-Tonnerre, bishop of Dijon, duke of Langres. Until a suitable house could be prepared for the Brothers, they were guests in the home of M. Rigoley. Antoine's zeal (he was the Director) for organizing the school and the community led him to secure books from De La Salle, which apparently were not needed and had to be stored in the Rigoley home at some inconvenience to the family. De La Salle wrote to M. Rigoley on 10 July 1705 to apologize for this trouble and to ask if the books could be kept in Dijon until they would be needed in some other school.<sup>11</sup>

Additional evidence of Antoine's organizing skills is seen in another document, which also reveals some interesting details about community life and the schools. It is a request for household goods for the new community and supplies for the schools in Dijon:

Memoir given by Brother Antoine [to the Council of the City of Dijon] to show what [the Brothers need]:

In the room for the exercises: a table, a bench, two brushes to clean the habits, two other brushes for the shoes, two combs, two candlesticks, a closet to store the linen and other needed items, a basin, two razors.

In the refectory: a table, a bench, a table mat, a metal pitcher for water, three medium-size glasses, four larger and four smaller ones, four plates, four bowls, four spoons, four forks, four knives, four cups, a small cupboard, a lamp.

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10. *Ibid.*

11. *Letters*, 35.6.

For other needs: a rope for the well, a clock, a bell for the door, a hammer [door-knocker?], a pruning knife, a spade, and some other necessary utensils for the house.

In the kitchen: a pot, a saucepan, two small food warmers, a cauldron, a seal, a frying pan, a fire-cover [stove?], bellows, a pothook, a grate, andirons, tongs, a bottle for oil, some chairs, a closet, a table, a cleaver, a cutting-block, a ladle, an iron pot, a basket.

In the dormitory: as many beds covered with green curtains as there are Brothers, a nightcap for each; one extra would be needed for some unforeseen resident.

In the closet: six drawers, some shelves to hold books, spiritual reading books, catechisms of the diocese and others, a small table, a small armoire, a candlestick.

Linen: at least six shirts for each Brother, six underpants, six handkerchiefs, six rabats, six nightcaps, two pair of sheets for each Brother, four tablecloths, a dozen napkins, four hand towels, four aprons, six dish cloths.

For the schools: two high chairs and one low chair, two signals, a bell, six benches twelve feet long, eight benches nine feet long, four tables at least sixteen inches in width and a dozen feet in length, able to be connected at both ends, arithmetic table for two panels (three feet high and five feet wide), four frames for hanging the alphabet, syllable, number, and punctuation charts, two small baskets for the pupils to put their bread for the poor, a small scoop, a basket or hamper to remove the dirt, two large crucifixes and other pictures for the classrooms, some paintings or pictures for the house, a closet or cupboard to store the books and paper of the school for the children.<sup>12</sup>

Antoine was sent to Mende as Director, probably sometime early in 1708, to replace Ponce, who was assigned to Avignon as Director and as the Brother responsible for the communities in the south.<sup>13</sup> At Mende Antoine had the task of helping the inimitable Brother Mathias, whose story will be told in the next chapter. In letters by De La Salle to Mathias in April 1708 (the year assigned in the critical edition

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12. Cahiers lasalliens 40/2, p. 79; a copy of this document is in the Generalate Archives in Rome, BJ 506–1, 8.

13. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 241, note 1, and p. 246, note on no. 1.

of the letters), the Founder speaks of Antoine as a “good Brother” with whom Mathias should be happy to live.<sup>14</sup> De La Salle also wanted Mathias to let him know whether Antoine was doing things differently from the previous Director (Ponce), possibly to check on Ponce as much as on Antoine.<sup>15</sup>

On 27 August 1709, Antoine and his companion, Joachim, were given a safe-conduct by the bishop for their journey to the novitiate in Paris to make the annual retreat. The safe-conduct would guarantee their Catholicity in case they were challenged by any local authorities on the lookout for traveling Huguenots or other heretics:

Pierre Baglion de La Salle [no relation], by the grace of God and the Apostolic Holy See, the Bishop and Lord of Mende, Count of the Gévaudan, Councillor of the King in all his councils: to Brother Antoine, Regent of the Little Schools of this city, greetings. We authorize you to go to Paris for the coming vacation period, accompanied by Brother Joachim, and we attest to all to whom it may concern that you profess the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion and that you have carried out your work with good results and edification. We ask the governors of the royal offices, mayors, and town councillors to grant you free passage on your journey. Given at Mende, in our episcopal palace, 27 August 1709. Pierre, Bishop of Mende. Dangles, Secretary.<sup>16</sup>

It is possible that Antoine was secretary for Brother Barthélemy when De La Salle made his journey to the south in 1711 or, more probably, in 1712. Rigault suggests this;<sup>17</sup> he and Lucard<sup>18</sup> both describe De La Salle as arranging the administrative services of the Institute around that time or earlier. These are among the assignments listed: Joseph, to be responsible for the communities in the north with residence in Reims, an appointment made as early as 1708 but expanded in 1711;<sup>19</sup> Ambroise, Director of the detention center in Saint Yon; Dosithée, Director of the community for the schools in Rouen; Bruno, Director in Darnétal; Jean, in Paris; André, in Laon; Côme, in Rethel.

It is interesting to find Antoine's greeting to M. Martineau, pastor in Mende, as a postscript to Barthélemy's letter to the pastor on 14

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14. *Letters*, 61.8.

15. *Ibid.*, 62.8.

16. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 194, note 2.

17. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 21.

18. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, pp. 274–275.

19. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 233.

July 1714.<sup>20</sup> This letter was written after the Brothers summoned De La Salle back to Paris (1 April) but before he returned (10 August).

Gallego<sup>21</sup> suggests that Antoine may well have been the Brother who began the register of the Brothers, around the year 1714, while he was serving as Barthélemy's secretary,<sup>22</sup> but Hermans questions this.<sup>23</sup>

Antoine was back in Dijon, assisting the Director, Brother Barnabé, on 8 February 1717, when Barthélemy made his tour of the communities to receive their agreement for the General Assembly called by De La Salle.<sup>24</sup> Since he was not a Director, Antoine was not a delegate to the Assembly, though he might have attended as secretary.

In 1718 De La Salle wrote a letter which Blain has preserved.<sup>25</sup> The name of the Brother is not given, but De La Salle speaks of him in the letter as "the oldest of our Brothers," meaning in age or in length of membership in the Institute. Strictly speaking, this would have been Gabriel Drolin, who entered two years earlier than Antoine, in 1684, and who was also two years older, but Gabriel was in Rome, and this letter seems to have been written to someone in France at the time. Antoine was next in line of seniority, having entered in September 1686, a month before Jean Jacquot, so Antoine is probably the recipient; Antoine was also six years older than Jean:

Well then, my very dear Brother, so you still want me to be your spiritual guide. I will be glad to act in this capacity on one condition, however: that you tell me my faults without any flattery. It is fitting that you should do so, since you are the oldest of our Brothers.<sup>26</sup>

De La Salle is obviously no longer the Superior, so the letter was written after May 1717.

Antoine was among the thirty members of the Chapter of 1725, when the Brothers formally received the Bull of Approbation at Saint Yon, and he renewed his perpetual vows according to the Bull with the other Brothers at that time. As secretary to Brother Timothée, he was also one of seven Brothers who signed the official record of the reception of the Bull.

20. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 315.

21. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 505.

22. Cahiers lasalliens 3.

23. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 8.

24. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185, note 1.

25. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 410.

26. *Letters*, 97.

On 23 May 1728, again as secretary to the Superior, he was one of the Brothers who signed an unusual contract, along with Timothée, the Assistants Irénée and Joseph, former Assistant Jean Jacquot, and six other Brothers. The contract between the Brothers and the father of a mentally handicapped son was to guarantee the care of this young man at Saint Yon; this was perhaps one of the first of the mentally ill that the Brothers served at Saint Yon, among the several other groups living at this center.<sup>27</sup> One of the Brothers at Saint Yon who signed this contract was a Brother Martinien (Nicolas Dupont), designated as the Director of Junior Novices, indicating that this group resided at Saint Yon at that time.

There is a manuscript in the Generalate Archives in which, during the year 1732, Antoine gave testimony to a possible miracle performed through the intercession of De La Salle, a cure of some kind of an ulcer, probably on a student.<sup>28</sup>

The Bull of Approbation specified that a General Chapter be held every ten years but allowed for exceptions to be made for special circumstances. The Chapter of 1734 was called together by Timothée in anticipation of 1735, in order take advantage of the presence of the Directors of the communities who had come to Rouen for the solemn transfer of the remains of De La Salle from the church of Saint Sever in Rouen to the newly completed chapel at Saint Yon. It was an effort to avoid within a year the expense and the fatigue of another journey to Rouen by these principal Brothers. Antoine was undoubtedly present among the older Brothers for the ceremony of transferring the remains of De La Salle, and he is listed as a delegate to the General Chapter; he was also one of the senior Brothers on the committee appointed to count the ballots for the election of Brother Étienne as the Second Assistant.<sup>29</sup>

Sometime after 1734, Antoine, at the age of sixty-eight, went to live at Saint Yon and became Assistant Procurator to Brother Thomas. He may have celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a Brother in 1736, if the Brothers paid attention to such anniversaries; there is no record that they did.

In 1739 Antoine was one of those who signed for the purchase of a farm by Brother Généreux, Director of the community in Reims. Others who signed the document were Timothée, Superior, and Étienne, listed as First Assistant; Antoine is listed as the Second Assistant.

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27. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, pp. 34–35.

28. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 587, note 177.

29. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 67, note.

This listing of the Assistants is strange because Irénée was still the First Assistant; Étienne was the Second Assistant, and Antoine was presumably the Assistant Procurator to Brother Thomas. It may be that Irénée was absent at the time and that there was a kind of substitution made by the Superior.

Antoine died on 1 April 1743 at the age of seventy-six.<sup>30</sup> He had been an active and highly effective Brother for fifty-seven years, one who gave De La Salle consistent and enlightened support during all the struggles for the founding of the Institute. In the obituary comments by Brother Lucard,<sup>31</sup> Brother Antoine Partois is said to have lived an edifying life during his retirement at Saint Yon.

### Brother Jean Jacquot

Jean Jacquot (also spelled Jacot), a native of Château-Porcien, was born 18 October 1672. He entered the community of the rue Neuve at the age of fourteen as a junior novice in October 1686.<sup>32</sup> De La Salle had sent teachers to Château-Porcien in 1682, when Jean was not yet ten years old, so Jean could have been a pupil of the Brothers before joining De La Salle in Reims. By 1686, when Jean joined, the teachers in the school would most likely have been called Brothers and been wearing the distinctive garb of the new society. This experience could have motivated Jean.

It is not known in which school or schools Jean Jacquot taught in the early years; he may have stayed in one or other of the three schools in Reims; he probably was not assigned to his own town of Château-Porcien nor to Laon, where Gabriel was stationed from 1685 to 1688; he could possibly have been assigned to Rethel or to Guise. He was not one of the first Brothers brought to Paris by De La Salle in 1688. In any case, he was in Paris in 1691 for the retreat of all the Brothers at Vaugirard.

In 1694 he was one of the group of twelve whom De La Salle selected to make the first perpetual vows. If the names of these Brothers listed in the record of the vows are in the order of their seniority in the Institute, Jean ranked seventh in that group.

In 1699 Jean was probably in Paris. Rigault<sup>33</sup> says that De La Salle assigned him to the task of training the new Brothers in the art of

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30. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

31. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 167.

32. Cahier lasalliens 3, p. 32.

teaching and to the responsibility for supervising their classes. He was still less than thirty years old, but he had already been teaching for some ten years or more.

In 1704 Jean is on the list of the Brothers who were fined by the Paris court for infringing on the rights of the syndicate and community of the writing masters.

In 1713 he is listed on the community records as the Director in Grenoble from 1713 to 1715.<sup>34</sup> This means that he was the leader of the Brothers in the community which gave De La Salle a warm welcome during the period of the Founder's painful sojourn in the south of France. Some biographers have stated that Brother Jacques, whom De La Salle sent to Paris from Grenoble in 1713, was the Director of the community. Lett suggests that the name Jean on community documents at that time refers to a servant Brother with that name.<sup>35</sup> The documentary evidence presented by Brother Félix Paul in his critical edition of the Founder's letters indicates that Jacques was not the Director of the community in Grenoble until later.<sup>36</sup> It makes sense that De La Salle would not have sent the Director to Paris in 1713 but rather another competent member of the community.

In 1717 Jean is listed as the Director of the community in Paris when Barthélemy made his visit there in order to secure the approval of the Brothers for the coming General Assembly. At that Assembly Jean was one of the sixteen Directors present, and when Barthélemy requested that two Brothers be chosen to help him in the administration of the Institute, Jean was the first one elected as Assistant to the Superior.

While Assistant, Jean continued as Director of the community in Paris, and he was there in November 1717 when Barthélemy made his visit to receive the Brothers' acceptance of his election as Superior.<sup>37</sup> That document was also signed by Brother Fiacre, who was the Visitor of the communities of the north. Thus for that occasion the community had with it their Superior, their Assistant, and their Visitor.

Jean is listed among those whom Barthélemy chose on 3 June 1718 to be a kind of executive council to assist him in making decisions on any new matters. Others on this council were Thomas, Procurator; Joseph, the other elected Assistant and Director of the community in Reims; Fiacre, in charge of visiting the communities in the north;

33. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 214.

34. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 218, note 3.

35. Lett, *Les Premiers Biographes*, p. 55.

36. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 218, note 3.

37. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

Michel, Director of Rouen; Irénée, Director of Novices; François, Prefect of the boarding school in Saint Yon, and Dosithée, Prefect of the detention center, also in Saint Yon.<sup>38</sup>

Jean attended the Chapter of 1720, and he presided as the senior member of the delegates; Antoine Partois, a month his senior, was not present, because he was not a Director of a community. Brother Timothée was elected Superior, and Jean and Joseph (Jean Le Roux) were reelected as First and Second Assistants.

Jean evidently helped Timothée in matters of publications. He may have been responsible for the first printing of the Rule in 1726.<sup>39</sup> It is clear that he worked with Brother Bernard, the one chosen to write the biography of De La Salle, as is evidenced by the letter Jean wrote about this work to De La Salle's brother, M. Louis de La Salle. The letter reveals the concern that the Brothers had about any references in the biography to the Founder's position regarding the conflict over the pope's condemnation of Jansenism and their awareness that M. Louis de La Salle did not agree with the position of the Founder. It indicates that Barthélemy and his advisers, most likely in consultation with Canon Blain, had debated how they would handle this delicate matter with De La Salle's brother:

To M. de La Salle, Canon of the Church of Notre Dame at Reims  
Monsieur:

With confidence I take the liberty of sending you these lines to offer you my most humble respects and at the same time to ask you to be kind enough to read the complete manuscript *Life* of M. de La Salle, our very dear Father and Founder, so that you may see whether everything therein is properly stated and whether there is anything incorrect or self-contradictory, as you do me the honor of stating in the letter you were kind enough to send me. We have, Sir, so much esteem and respect for you personally that it makes it an indispensable duty for us to submit to whatever you may decide on this point.

However, I take the liberty of declaring what follows: namely, that several persons earnestly hope that what is said in this manuscript about his true sentiments concerning our current difficulties and concerning various opinions should be left intact; this, they think, is in the best interests of the Institute. Others, a

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38. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, pp. 371–372; also Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 417, who omits the name of Thomas.

39. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 3, note 3.

much smaller number, say that it would be best to omit all references to these questions. Furthermore, Monsieur, if I may express an opinion on this point, I think that it is good and even necessary to say things as they are without, however, shocking anybody; this would be to our advantage.

I am convinced, Monsieur, that because you are, like your beloved brother, entirely desirous to be of service to us, you will not fail to do in this matter whatever is most conducive to the glory of God and to the salvation of our neighbor. We feel sure that we have found another father in your kind self to replace the one who has left us and enjoys heavenly glory. We shall not fail, Monsieur, to offer our prayers to God, asking him to reserve the same eternal happiness for you also.

This is the sincere wish of one who is glad to declare himself, with deep respect and full confidence, Monsieur, your most humble and perfectly obedient servant,

Brother Jean

Paris, 4 May 1723.<sup>40</sup>

Jean also helped both Barthélemy and Timothée to gather testimonies concerning the Founder that would be needed for the process of canonization. One such document is not dated, but Aroz<sup>41</sup>—who states that the handwriting is clearly Jean's—concludes it was probably in 1720. It is addressed to Père François Leschassier, Superior of the Sulpicians, and asks for his testimony concerning De La Salle as a seminarian:

How long did M. de La Salle stay in the seminary; how old was he when he entered, in what year; how did he conduct himself; what virtues did he practice; what special things did he do, and what did people notice about him when he began the schools in Paris?

Leschassier wrote that De La Salle was a seminarian from 18 October 1670 to 19 April 1672, and he added:

He was from the beginning a faithful observer of the rule, exact in the exercises of the community. Rather early on, he seemed more detached from the world than he was when he entered. His conversation was always gentle and sincere. He never seemed to me to cause any displeasure to anyone nor to have drawn any

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40. *John Baptist de La Salle: Two Early Biographies*, pp. 339–340.

41. *Cahiers lasalliens* 41/2, p. 267.

reproach from anyone. When he came to Paris, I saw in him a remarkable progress in all the virtues. All who knew him saw proofs of this in all his conduct, especially in the patience with which he suffered the contempt people showed for his person and his work.<sup>42</sup>

On 9 January 1722, Brothers Jean and Jean-François Boucqueton, Director of the community of Saint-Denis, signed a contract with Mme Marie Poignant for the ownership of the house of the community. Jean is identified in the contract as a “bourgeois living on the rue Barouillère” in the parish of Saint Sulpice, where he was Director of the community in Paris as well as Assistant to Brother Barthélemy.

Jean attended the General Chapter of 1725, assembled on the occasion of the solemn reception of the Bull of Approbation. At this Chapter Timothée offered his resignation, followed by the resignation of the two Assistants. Timothée was reelected. Brother Irénée (Claude-François du Lac de Montisambert), the Director of Novices, was elected as First Assistant to replace Jean, and Joseph was reelected as Second Assistant. Biographers have not attempted any explanation of the fact that Jean was not reelected, except to comment on the high regard that the Brothers had for Irénée, many of whom had him as their Director in the novitiate. Jean was at that time only fifty-three years old and would live until 1759 and the age of eighty-seven, so he must have been in good health. He is listed among the signatories of the record of the Chapter as the Director of the community in Rouen, evidently his assignment by Brother Timothée during the Chapter.

On 23 May 1726, Jean was one of the Brothers, as a “former Assistant,” who signed the unusual contract—along with Timothée, the Assistants Irénée and Joseph, Antoine Partois, who was Timothée’s secretary, and six other Brothers—to guarantee the care of a mentally handicapped young man at Saint Yon.

Jean Jacquot attended the gathering of the Brothers on the occasion in 1734 of the transfer of the body of De La Salle from the church of Saint Sever to the chapel at Saint Yon, and he was present, by virtue of his rank as former Assistant, at the Chapter which was held on that occasion.

The Second Assistant, Brother Joseph, had died in 1729. In accord with a decision of the General Chapter of 1720, his replacement had been elected by balloting through the mail. Brother Dosithée (Claude Longière) was chosen, and Jean, along with Timothée and

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42. *Ibid.*, p. 269.

Antoine Partois, the secretary, made up the committee for counting the ballots. But now Dosithée's health was not good; because he was going blind, he offered his resignation. Brother Étienne (Jean Perotin) was chosen to be the Second Assistant. Brother Irénée had been re-elected as the First Assistant.

Brother Jean, as former Assistant, also attended the Chapters of 1745 and 1751, the latter convened by Timothée because he intended to resign as Superior on account of his failing health. Brother Claude (Jean-Pierre Nivet) was elected Superior to succeed Timothée. Jean, at the age of seventy-four, was the only one at this Chapter who had been a member of the original community on the rue Neuve.

After the Chapter, Brother Jean retired to Saint Yon, where he died on 10 March 1759.<sup>43</sup> Lucard<sup>44</sup> mentions in his obituary notice that Jean had contributed successively to the schools of Paris, Reims, Rouen, and Châteaudun. There seems to be no record of his work at Reims between his work in Paris and in Rouen; perhaps Lucard is considering Jean's original assignment while he was living in the community on the rue Neuve, or perhaps Jean did have an interim assignment in Reims after his work in Rouen. Most of his career was certainly as Director of the community in Paris. The community of Châteaudun had been opened in 1740; it may have been at that time that Jean was assigned there.

## Brother Gabriel Drolin

There is a register, entitled *Catalogue des Frères*, of all the Brothers who were living at that time and who entered subsequently; it was first assembled around the year 1714. The part which is reproduced in Cahiers lasalliens 3 includes the names of all the Brothers through August 1725.

The first name on the list of this *Catalogue* is Gabriel Drolin; the *Catalogue* states that he was a native of Reims, that he was born on 22 July 1664 in the parish of Saint Jacques, and that he entered the Institute around the year 1684, made perpetual vows on 6 June 1694, left France [to go to Rome in 1702], returned [to France in 1728], and died in Auxonne in 1733.<sup>45</sup> Obviously those responsible for the *Catalogue* made some effort to add information to the register after the original listing around the year 1714.

43. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

44. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 296.

45. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

Gabriel was the fourth of twelve children born to Étienne Drolin (1633–1681) and Claire Salmon. Gabriel's father was listed as a maker of wine casks in 1678 and as a harness-maker in 1681.<sup>46</sup> Gabriel's younger brother, Gérard, also entered the Institute, probably in 1693; his story will be told in the next chapter. One of Gabriel's sisters was named Catherine; she had at least two sons, nephews of Gabriel, one of whom is mentioned in a letter of De La Salle to Gabriel.<sup>47</sup>

When Adrien Nyel, with De La Salle's help, was opening schools in Reims in 1679, one was in Gabriel's parish of Saint Jacques. Gabriel was fifteen years old, and he probably began preparing for the priesthood, like other young men who later became Brothers.<sup>48</sup> Around five years later, as the *Catalogue* states, Gabriel joined De La Salle, then in the community house on the rue Neuve. Was the young man influenced by the notoriety that De La Salle had attracted in giving up his canonry in August of 1683 or by his using all his wealth to buy bread for the poor during the famine of 1684–85? Was Gabriel a member when the community decided in 1684 or 1685 to adopt a distinctive habit and its first regulations? An affirmative answer to these questions is at least probable.

There is evidence that Gabriel was assigned to the school in Laon in 1685.<sup>49</sup> It was at that time, with the opening of classes in October, that Adrien Nyel, now sixty-four years old, decided to return to Rouen and to turn over the schools of Guise and Laon to the care of De La Salle. Gabriel was twenty-one years old when he was entrusted with responsibility for the school. There were two classes; Gabriel taught one; Brother Nicolas Bourlette was assigned to teach the other.

Gabriel may have left Laon in 1686 after the death of Nicolas Bourlette, for there is evidence that Brother Joseph became Director of Laon in that year.<sup>50</sup> Gabriel, however, was back in Laon again in 1696 until 1698,<sup>51</sup> for in the archives of the city are receipts signed by him in 1697 and 1698.<sup>52</sup>

Gallego says that Brother Gabriel was the Director of the community in Paris on the rue Princesse from 1698 to 1700.<sup>53</sup> In 1700 he was assigned to open the community and school in Calais.<sup>54</sup> Gabriel

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46. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 134, note 1.

47. *Letters*, 32.13.

48. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 1, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 224.

49. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 44.

50. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

51. *Ibid.*

52. Cahiers lasalliens 40/2, p. 77.

53. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 306.

de Roly (a reasonable variation for Drolin at that time) is the signature on the document of the community of Calais in July of 1700 attesting to the opening of the Lasallian school in that city. It is also clear, from letters written to Gabriel by De La Salle, that Gabriel knew the governor of Calais and wrote to him from Rome.<sup>55</sup>

Meanwhile, Gabriel had taken part in two historic events in the history of the Institute. In 1691 he and Nicolas Vuyart were asked by De La Salle to join with him in what has been called the heroic vow “of association and union to bring about and maintain the said establishment [of the Society of the Christian Schools] without being able to withdraw from this obligation, even if we are obliged to beg for alms and live on bread alone.”<sup>56</sup> That was a time of crisis for De La Salle, when the number of Brothers may have been reduced to a mere dozen after nine years of effort to establish the Institute. De La Salle selected Gabriel to be one of the two men he could count on to persevere in commitment to the project of the Christian Schools, showing the respect De La Salle had for him.

In 1694 Gabriel was also one of the twelve Brothers selected by De La Salle to make with him the first perpetual vows: of association to conduct schools for the poor, of stability in the Institute, and of obedience to go wherever they would be sent and to do whatever they would be assigned.

This obedience was put into action when Gabriel was again selected by De La Salle for a special assignment: to go to Rome. Letters to Gabriel from De La Salle<sup>57</sup> seem to show that Gabriel went to Rome in 1702. It was the Founder’s plan to establish a free school for poor children in Rome “in order to ask God for the grace that their Society be always entirely submissive to [the Church of Rome].”<sup>58</sup> According to Lucard, who does not give his source, Gabriel’s brother, Brother Gérard—who had entered the Institute some time after Gabriel—was assigned to accompany him on this mission.<sup>59</sup>

How did Gabriel actually proceed with his mission in Rome? It would be a journey on foot over a period of two months during the vacation of the summer and early fall. To begin, he and his brother, Gérard, did not leave Paris empty handed. De La Salle gave them 100

54. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 45.

55. *Letters*, 22.4.

56. Blain, vol. 1., book 2, chap. 10, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 313.

57. *Letters*, 14.9, 28.21.

58. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 18, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 173, De La Salle’s last will and testament.

59. Lucard, *Annales de l’Institut*, 1, p. 110.

livres, probably equivalent to \$1,000 or more in today's economy.<sup>60</sup> In addition, and more importantly, he gave them letters of introduction to Cardinal César d'Estrées, former bishop of Laon, whose nephew, Jean d'Estrées, succeeded him in 1681 and was therefore acquainted with Gabriel.<sup>61</sup>

The route of the journey to Rome was most likely the one taken by the Brothers in 1760, a description of which is given in the Avignon Archives.<sup>62</sup> They went from Paris to Lyon, crossed the Alps at Fréjus, about fifty miles due east of Grenoble, and from there journeyed through Torino, Piacenza, Modena, and the Papal States, along the Adriatic coast. It was the safest route, the one with the least passport problems, usually taken by pilgrims on their way to Loreto. From there they would cross the Apennines at Terni and then go on to Rome.

Gabriel became friendly with Cardinal d'Estrées's vicar-general, who later became Bishop Joseph-François Gualtieri of the diocese of Vaison. It was Bishop Gualtieri who introduced Gabriel to the Vincentian René Divers, Procurator for the Vincentians in Rome.



De La Salle blesses the Drolin brothers, Gabriel and Gérard, on their departure for Rome in 1702. Painting by Aurelio Mariani, 1906. Photo E. Roussel (*J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 315, plate 22*).

60. Maillefer, *Cahiers lasalliens* 6, p. 137; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 105.

61. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 54.

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60. Maillefer, *Cahiers lasalliens* 6, p. 137; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 105.

61. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 54.

In all probability it was also Bishop Gualtieri who brought Brother Gérard back to France when the bishop left Rome in June 1703 to take possession of his see in Vaison, near Avignon.<sup>63</sup> Gérard had been able to last less than a year in Rome, but it was through him and his connection with Bishop Gualtieri<sup>64</sup> that M. Jean-Pierre Madon de Châteaublanc became familiar with the Brothers; inspired by his wife, he assisted significantly in establishing the Brothers in Avignon.

It was possibly M. Divers who arranged for Gabriel to reside with friends of the Vincentians who were living in Rome, first M. Jean-François,<sup>65</sup> or Jean-Baptiste, Théodon,<sup>66</sup> a sculptor with whom De La Salle was acquainted, and then with the family of M. Claude de La Bussière. Divers also gave Gabriel spiritual support, as revealed in an archival manuscript of the Vincentians written after the death of Divers:

A French teacher belonging to a Paris community established by M. de La Salle had gone to Rome some years earlier, in order to give children free religious instruction and to teach them at the same time how to read and write. But this good man was without any money shortly after coming to Rome and had decided to quit this good enterprise and return to France. When he made known his intention to M. Divers, the latter neglected nothing in order to dissuade him from his decision, because he saw the great good that he was doing. M. Divers provided for his support through friends, even obtaining a papal subsidy for his maintenance, which he enjoys to this day, while he conducts a school for a good number of young children, keeping them from a life of laziness, teaching them how to read and write, and placing them on the road to heaven, both by instructing them in Christian doctrine and by inspiring them with love and respect for God by his good example.<sup>67</sup>

Even with the help of M. Divers, it took some time for Gabriel to break into the Roman school system for children of the poor. Teachers in the regional schools had to demonstrate that a school was needed in the region, that they were competent to conduct the school, and that they had references to assure their good character and the probity of their way of life.

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62. *Ibid.*, p. 54, note 9.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

64. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 17, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 396.

65. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 61.

66. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 347.

67. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 56.

In the beginning, Gabriel taught reading and writing to De La Bussière's young daughters as a way of compensating for his room and board with the family. De La Salle did not approve of this.<sup>68</sup> Around the same time, Gabriel was also teaching catechism to poor children, as a volunteer, in the church of San Lorenzo in Lucina.<sup>69</sup> A short time later, probably early in 1705, he was accepted by the supervisor of that region to open a school in the same parish.<sup>70</sup> By 1709 Gabriel had managed to receive a position as teacher in a papal school, first on a temporary basis and then permanently.<sup>71</sup> This was achieved, as stated in the obituary note on M. Divers, with that priest's help but especially with the help of Bishop Joseph Guyon de Crochans, whom Gabriel came to know through the Vincentians.<sup>72</sup> This school was located on the Via della Purificazione, near Piazza Barberini, in the parish of Santa Susanna. Gabriel continued to conduct this school until he left Rome in 1728.

For the first sixteen of these years, De La Salle, until his death, carried on a correspondence with Gabriel. The witness of a special relationship between De La Salle and Gabriel has been preserved in twenty of these letters. It is, of course, significant that Gabriel kept the letters and made them part of the heritage of the beginning of the Institute. From these letters much can be learned about De La Salle, about the development of the Institute during those years, and especially about Gabriel himself, not only what he was able to accomplish in Rome but also about himself personally.

Obviously Gabriel was a loyal and steadfast person. He was alone as a Brother without community support, away from his own country for twenty-four years. Brother Gérard, his brother, unable to last a year, returned to France in 1703. Gabriel was on his own to start a school in a foreign language and in a city with a well-organized bureaucracy for scholastic as well as ecclesiastical affairs. He received help from the Vincentians and their acquaintances to find a place to live and insinuate himself into the system of free schools for the poor.

In the beginning the Founder was impatient with Gabriel's slow start and need for money. In the earliest letter that has been preserved, which is dated Paris, 13 August 1704, De La Salle wrote:

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68. *Letters*, 13.2.

69. *Ibid.*, 14.9.

70. *Ibid.*, 17.2, 24.9.

71. *Ibid.*, 27.4.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–101.

On reading your letter, I could not understand how you could have put yourself into the position you say you are in, just teaching reading and writing to little girls, and assuming a worldly spirit.

You must not try to cut down on expenses by doing what is contrary to your Institute practices.<sup>73</sup>

In another letter, probably written in October of the same year, 1704, De La Salle wrote:

I am sending you a note asking [M. Théodon] to advance you 50 livres to get yourself settled and to provide for your needs when you do.

Therefore, I beg you to do so at once, for the longer you delay the older you get, and after all this there will be nothing to show.

Although you have been living in a house for a year or two years, as you are now, what progress have you made when all is said and done?

You will have to make up your mind to come back or to get something under way where you are.

. . . .

It is about two years since you went to Rome, so you must get something done and live in accordance with your vocation.

. . . .

The sooner you can get out of your present situation and be employed according to your vocation the better it will be.

For the love of God, work toward this.<sup>74</sup>

The school system for the poor in Rome was so organized that it was very difficult to get into it; to start a school on one's own was simply impossible. A person had to be accepted by the Supervisor of one of the fourteen school regions into which Rome was divided; these Regional Supervisors were, in turn, under the authority of the Rector of the University of Rome, *La Sapienza*. Furthermore, in presenting himself publicly, Brother Gabriel could not be recognized as a religious person, because the Institute was not in any way approved. Further, Rome required all religious to be living in an official religious community.

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73. Ibid., 13.2–3.

74. Ibid., 14.7–10, 14, 20–21.

Other difficulties existed: vernacular bibles were prohibited in Rome, and De La Salle did not want Gabriel to be using one in Latin. De La Salle also wanted Gabriel to continue to wear the Brothers' robe, which was quite different from anything like it in Rome and bound to raise questions about its significance. De La Salle also wanted Gabriel to be appointed in charge of a papal school, which was another system altogether.

De La Salle's letters written within the next few months carry a tone of impatience with Gabriel's inability to establish himself in a Roman school. On 11 February 1705, De La Salle wrote, "I do not know if you will ever get anything done in your present place."<sup>75</sup> Later, when Gabriel was able to secure a position in a regional school, De La Salle's letters have a change of tone. On 27 April 1705 he wrote:

[Your letter] brought me a great deal of joy, for not only has it been a long time since I received any news from you, but also because you tell me that at last you are carrying out the work proper to your vocation.

. . . .

I am far from taking you to task. All that I have been impatiently waiting for is that you should carry out the work that is yours.

I am surprised that you say that you have never got much support from me, because there is nothing I haven't tried to do and am not ready to do to support you.

I am quite sure that you have no intention of following the example of Brother Nicolas, and that is the reason I have placed so much confidence in you.<sup>76</sup>

The reference is to Brother Nicolas Vuyart, who left the Institute in 1704.

De La Salle's letters give a clue to what Gabriel had written to him. They show that Gabriel could talk quite frankly and even forcefully to the Founder. By 1705 Gabriel had been a Brother for twenty years and had been closer to De La Salle than any other Brother. Though he was thirteen years younger than De La Salle—and not a priest, like the Founder—they had developed a friendship during those twenty years that enabled both of them to level with each other when the occasion arose. In fact, it is in a subsequent letter of the same year, 1705, that De La Salle speaks in a personal way that is not found in any other letters or in any of his other writings, not even in

75. *Ibid.*, 16.6.

76. *Ibid.*, 17.2, 10–12.

the excerpts from a memoir on the beginnings of the Institute, a document reported by his early biographers.<sup>77</sup> On 28 August 1705, De La Salle reveals to Gabriel one of his basic principles of action:

As for myself, I do not like to make the first move in any endeavor, and I will not do it in Rome any more than elsewhere. I leave it to Divine Providence to make the first move, and then I am satisfied.

When it is clear that I am acting only under the direction of Providence, I have nothing to reproach myself with. When I make the first move, it is only I myself who am active, so I don't expect to see much good result; neither does God usually give the action his special blessing.<sup>78</sup>

In a letter of the same year, De La Salle speaks quite frankly about another aspect of his personality, namely, his attitude concerning debts. After telling Gabriel that he will send him some money but that it will be difficult to do this, because he expects to be in debt for the next three months, the Founder adds:

Please do not go into debt without my approval, for I am not at all happy about debts. I do not want any and have never wanted or allowed any in our communities. There is nothing I detest so much. That is why you will never be able to count on me again when it comes to debts, for I will not listen to the least suggestion.

As far as expenditure goes, I want to look ahead not behind me. Take no steps, make no decisions, without asking my advice beforehand. I will answer you at once.

. . . .

I know it is better to live in difficult circumstances, withdrawn from worldly concerns, and I am glad that you are in such dispositions. Still, when you decide to do this, you must put yourself entirely in the hands of Divine Providence, or if you have not enough virtue for that nor enough faith, then you must take the necessary means before you carry out your plan. If you do neither, you are not acting as a Christian nor as an intelligent man.<sup>79</sup>

In a letter written in 1710,<sup>80</sup> there is indication that in his turn, Gabriel did not hesitate to speak his mind to De La Salle. None of

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77. See *Cahiers lasalliens* 10, pp. 105ff.

78. *Letters*, 18, 17–18.

79. *Ibid.*, 19.10–11, 14.

80. *Ibid.*, 28.

Gabriel's letters has been preserved, but from the Founder's letters to him some idea of what Gabriel wrote can be guessed. He must have given several reasons why De La Salle should send another Brother to help him, telling De La Salle that he is no longer a young man and that a younger Brother will need to be trained in the customs and language of Italy. He explains that the extra expense would last for a year only. He also tells De La Salle that he has not heard from him in several months and that this has caused him to falter in his love for piety and fidelity to the Rule. He invites De La Salle to come to Rome to visit him. He also says that De La Salle has not been completely honest in what he writes to him.

Despite this element of tension between De La Salle and Gabriel, it is clear that De La Salle had confidence in his friend and Brother. The tension is above board and honest, as between close friends. It does not interfere with De La Salle's regularly telling Gabriel the news about the Institute in France, in some cases giving data found nowhere else. He tells Gabriel of a legacy of 2,000 livres that he expects to receive from M. Brocard of Rethel as soon as the man's sister dies, which he says will apparently not be long to wait for, because she is eighty-five or eighty-six.<sup>81</sup> In the same letter he mentions that M. de La Chétardie is holding back payment of the Brothers' stipends.

In another letter De La Salle reports the death of two Brothers in Chartres, Michel and Jacques, who died of typhoid fever.<sup>82</sup> In a letter dated 4 September 1705, De La Salle informs Gabriel that he has "established our novitiate in a suburb of Rouen in a fine house which used to be occupied by some nuns."<sup>83</sup> He explains that this is why he is short of money, since he is paying 100 livres rent on the house every three months.<sup>84</sup> In the same letter he tells Gabriel that Brother Albert, the Director in Avignon, wrote to tell him that the Diocesan Censor in that papal city had returned "all our books with his approval." In different letters he also tells Gabriel about the Brothers beginning to work in schools in Avignon,<sup>85</sup> Marseille,<sup>86</sup> Dijon, Brest,<sup>87</sup> Grenoble, Alès, Mende, Mâcon,<sup>88</sup> Versailles, Boulogne, and Moulins.<sup>89</sup>

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81. *Ibid.*, 14.16.

82. *Ibid.*, 18.2.

83. *Ibid.*, 19.4.

84. *Ibid.*, 4 and p. 80.

85. *Ibid.*, 16.2.

86. *Ibid.*, 19.20.

87. *Ibid.*, 23.

88. *Ibid.*, 27.14.

89. *Ibid.*, 29.10.

In all this exchange of information, De La Salle is treating Gabriel as one who is equally responsible for the Institute, reminiscent of the special vow they made in the crisis of 1691 and the perpetual vows they made together in 1694.

Another significant aspect of De La Salle's relationship with Gabriel, as well as De La Salle's own relationships with various members of the hierarchy, is the number of times that the Founder writes about various bishops. In twelve of the twenty letters, he shares news or asks questions about them. The archbishop of Avignon, Laurent Fieschi, who was well disposed toward the Brothers, is mentioned in seven letters; it is interesting to see how much De La Salle involved himself in news about this archbishop's becoming a cardinal and shared this with Gabriel.

De La Salle's concern for maintaining good relationships with the bishops is also noted in his desire to thank Bishop Joseph Guyon de Crochans for the help the bishop gave to Gabriel in Rome; De La Salle tells Gabriel in one letter that he had asked Brother Ponce to visit the bishop to thank him, and in another letter he writes that he himself had dinner with the bishop to thank him personally, an example of De La Salle's care about social decorum. It was for this bishop of the diocese of Cavaillon that De La Salle sent Brothers in 1707 to teach in a school in the town of Valréas.

At least five other bishops are mentioned in the letters to Gabriel. In one letter De La Salle even comments in a negative way about Cardinal de Noailles of Paris, saying that "the vacillations [*affaires*] of the archbishop of Paris are causing concern among the bishops. I don't know what is thought of this in Rome."<sup>90</sup>

Although there is all this friendly exchange of news and a frank expression of a certain tension in the letters that De La Salle wrote, it is also clear that De La Salle took responsibility for Gabriel's spiritual life.

There is not the detailed, point-by-point response to the account of conduct that characterizes most of the letters De La Salle wrote to the other Brothers, but the Founder does give many specific directives to his disciple. In these directives can be seen the frank way in which Gabriel in his letters to the Founder speaks of what he is doing and of his shortcomings, the same way that the Brothers were trained to write their monthly letters to the Superior. The following examples are typical of this kind of spiritual direction for Gabriel:

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90. Ibid., 32.6.

. . . I beg you, do nothing that is not in accord with your Institute, whatever the cost; otherwise, God will not bless you.

Investigate thoroughly this canon who spoke to you, to see if he is a man to be relied on and if what he told you is not just idle talk. . . .

Ask God in prayer to do with you as he wishes.

You must abandon yourself completely to his guidance, and you must do nothing without advice. . . .

Above all else, do not do anything that is not in accord with your Institute.<sup>91</sup>

Try, I beseech you, to overcome the worldly spirit to which you have quite a tendency, by devoting yourself to prayer and to the spiritual exercises and by restricting the number of visits you make. In trying to have the spirit of your Institute as deeply as possible, you will draw down on yourself God's graces in abundance.<sup>92</sup>

Please go often to Saint Peter's as a sign of your complete submission to the Church.<sup>93</sup>

See if God shows his approval of your work, and notice if Divine Providence is assisting you or if it seems that Providence wishes to help you.<sup>94</sup>

Don't let slip the opportunities that come your way, but don't be overeager.<sup>95</sup>

Often pray that God will bless this work of his.<sup>96</sup>

It is good to know that you have been on retreat in order to try to regain fully the spirit of your vocation and that of prayer. I pray that God will grant you this grace.

I know that it is a great misfortune to have to be in contact with the world, and it is much to your advantage that you have, to a great extent, broken that contact. Make every effort, also, to dissociate yourself from those candidates for ordination.

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91. *Ibid.*, 13.4–5, 13–14, 16.

92. *Ibid.*, 17.18.

93. *Ibid.*, 19.24.

94. *Ibid.*, 20.17.

95. *Ibid.*, 24.8.

96. *Ibid.*, 26.9.

You may be assured that I will not fail to pray to God for you. . . .

I know, too, that there is a great deal of corruption where you are and that you have to be very careful and watchful over yourself not to get caught up in it. Blessed be God that he has given you the grace to keep free from it up till now.<sup>97</sup>

I do not fail to pray for you and for the success of your work.

I am upset that you must have so much contact with the world. It is easy for me to see that because of this your piety has diminished. Take up the practice of prayer once and for all, I beg you.

. . .

I am told that you intend to take the tonsure. Tell me how the matter stands. You know, of course, that this is contrary to Institute practice. . . .

I am delighted that you have broken contact with those priesthood candidate friends of yours. Try to do the same with the others as soon as possible.<sup>98</sup>

It is revealing of De La Salle's style of direction with Gabriel that he deals so gently with the prospect of Gabriel's taking the tonsure, which someone had reported to the Founder, since this would be a serious breach of Institute rule. Gabriel's name is actually listed in the *Liber Ordinationum* of the Vicariate in Rome among those tonsured on 5 May 1709.<sup>99</sup> One reason Gabriel may not have hesitated to be tonsured may have been the fact that he had been tonsured before he entered the Institute, if Blain is correct in what he says.<sup>100</sup>

Gabriel was also listed as a subdeacon in one of the annual reports of the parish of Santa Susanna,<sup>101</sup> but this was quite probably a misunderstanding of the person making up the register, based on the fact that Gabriel was wearing what seemed to be a soutane yet was never seen offering Mass. He is not listed in this way on the registers of subsequent years.

The fact that Gabriel decided to take the tonsure, despite the prohibition which he must have known, may indicate that he was capable of taking some steps on his own initiative, possibly with guidance from M. Divers. Gabriel may have hoped for some benefice to give

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97. Ibid., 27.8–10, 13.

98. Ibid., 28.17–18, 24, 29.

99. Ibid., p. 104.

100. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 10, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 314.

101. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 121, note 5.

him financial support. Among other things, he wrote to his sister for money,<sup>102</sup> something he also must have known was contrary to regulations. He also wrote to the bishop of Calais, for which De La Salle reproached him.<sup>103</sup> De La Salle probably picked Gabriel for the Roman project because he knew Gabriel had this quality of initiative as well as loyalty to the Institute. This may be seen in some of the words De La Salle wrote to Gabriel, possibly as early as 1704:

You should be encouraging me, and if you yourself have no great enthusiasm for this work, which seems to be the case, then you will not succeed. . . .

I will help you in every way I can, but I do think that for the undertaking to succeed, the initiative must come from you and not from me. What I have to do is back you up.<sup>104</sup>

Notable, too, as illustrative of De La Salle's way of relating to Gabriel, is the restrained and matter-of-fact way with which the Founder addresses the disagreements he has with Gabriel in the instances already cited and also in several other instances.<sup>105</sup>

In the last letter De La Salle wrote to Gabriel, on 5 December 1716, the underlying affection they had for one another is clearly seen. De La Salle wrote this letter the day after he had gathered the principal Brothers of Saint Yon to draw up a document commissioning Brother Barthélemy to visit all the communities in France in order to secure their agreement for the General Assembly that would elect a Brother as Superior. He wrote this letter, probably at the request of the Brothers, to ask Gabriel to accept in advance the decisions of this Assembly. He also wrote:

It has been against my wishes that I haven't written to you for so long, my very dear Brother. I wrote to you several times without receiving a reply. I think that my letters were intercepted, as I know some of yours have been.

I have had many disappointments during this time. At present I am living in a house in a suburb of Rouen. It is called Saint Yon, and we have our novitiate here.

I assure you that I have a great tenderness and affection for you and often pray to God for you.

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102. *Letters*, 23.11.

103. *Ibid.*, 22.4.

104. *Ibid.*, 15.2, 7.

105. *Ibid.*, 23, 24, 28, 31.

You can write to me as often as you wish. I have confidence that the Brother who is now in charge at Avignon will faithfully forward your letters to me. He is a very discreet man. I will answer them.

For nearly ten months now, I have been ill in this house, where I have been living for a year.

The vacillations [*affaires*] of the archbishop of Paris are causing concern among the bishops. I don't know what is thought of this in Rome.

I have been greatly encouraged by your last letter, and the assurance of your wholehearted affection gives me much joy.

Please let me know how you are getting along.

I was hoping to send you, during the holidays, a Brother who has been in Rome, knows a little of the Italian language, and is a prudent man and a good teacher. But we have employed him elsewhere in the belief that his usefulness in that position would be a matter of great importance.

The Brothers are preparing for an assembly from Ascension Day to Pentecost Sunday to settle many matters that concern our rules and the government of the Institute.

I pray you to give your consent to the decisions that shall be made at this assembly by the principal Brothers of our Society.

I believe that you are still teaching your classes. Please let me know how many students you have.

Your nephew came to see me, saying that he wished to be a Brother and that he had been to see you. He said that you were going to become a priest. As he is of changeable temperament, I sent him away to think it over. I haven't heard from him since.

I am, my very dear Brother,

Devotedly yours in Our Lord,

De La Salle<sup>106</sup>

There is no record that Gabriel answered this letter, but a letter which Brother Barthélemy wrote to Gabriel on 18 February 1718 seems to indicate that Gabriel did answer and that the letter was never delivered. Barthélemy's letter was a response to a letter Gabriel had written to his family in Reims, which was delivered to Brother

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106. *Ibid.*, 32.

Joseph, Director of the community there.<sup>107</sup> Gabriel had written to his family because he had no sure knowledge of what had happened at the General Assembly of 1717 or who had taken De La Salle's place as Superior; he did not know Barthélemy, who had entered the Institute after Gabriel had gone to Rome.

In his letter Gabriel had expressed concern about not having heard from De La Salle for over a year. Barthélemy explains to Gabriel that the Founder, in turn, was worried that he had not received an answer to his letter of December 1716; he mentions the Founder's desire to give up his role as Superior, the General Assembly, and his own election as Superior. Gabriel again receives a promise to send another Brother to Rome. Barthélemy then adds details about the plan to send Brothers to Canada and asks Gabriel to visit Saint Peter's to pray for the Institute. In a thoughtful postscript, he sends greetings from Brother Jean Jacquot, one of the few Brothers whom Gabriel would remember, because they made perpetual vows together in 1694.

In a second letter to Gabriel, on 13 April 1719, Barthélemy announces the death of De La Salle, giving brief details of the Founder's last days and the burial. He adds in a postscript the first part of De La Salle's last will and testament, along with a comment about the Founder's defense of the Constitution *Unigenitus* of Pope Clement XI.

Early in 1726, Brothers were finally sent to relieve Gabriel in Rome.<sup>108</sup> For this purpose, Brother Timothée, Superior since 1720, selected two Brothers, Fiacre Nonnez, Director of the community in Avignon and probably the Visitor for the communities in the south, and Thomas Frappet, Director of the community in Marseille and Procurator of the Institute. Fiacre was sent to replace Gabriel; Thomas, to help in the transition. The two Brothers also came to Rome in order to express the gratitude of the Institute to Pope Benedict XIII for the Bull of Approbation granted the previous year.

Regarding the Bull, one wonders if Brother Gabriel had an influence on one of its details, namely, the statement about the length of the robe. The Rule originally stated that the robe extends to the calf of the leg, whereas the Bull states that it extends to the ankle. This change could have been a result of Gabriel's using his own judgment to adjust to circumstances in Rome, probably with the advice of his clerical friends, an early example of acculturation in the history of the Institute. Blain says that De La Salle authorized Gabriel to make this

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107. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 174.

108. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 3.

adjustment,<sup>109</sup> but in two letters<sup>110</sup> De La Salle seems to show concern that Gabriel may have changed the robe, so Blain must be in error.<sup>111</sup>

Cardinal Melchior de Polignac, one of the cardinals who worked for the Bull of Approbation, presented the three Brothers—Gabriel, Fiacre, and Thomas—to the pope, who received them very graciously and granted extraordinary and perpetual favors to the Institute in a special Bull of 4 March 1727. These favors included a plenary indulgence to the Brothers on the occasion of their perpetual vows and another at the hour of death. The same indulgence is granted to anyone making a visit to any of the Brothers' chapels on the feasts of the Epiphany, Saint Joseph, and four other feasts of their choice approved by their bishop. The pope also gave to Brother Gabriel, for the Superior, several relics, including one of the true cross.<sup>112</sup>

These three Brothers formed the first community outside France. Thomas returned to France after a brief stay.<sup>113</sup> Gabriel remained for at least a year to help Fiacre learn Italian, adjust to the program of the papal school, and become familiar with Roman customs. At this time, two classes were formed, each of sixty pupils, the maximum number allowed in a class by the regulations of the rector of the university.

Gabriel probably returned to France in August 1728. Fiacre seems to have been alone until 1730, when Brother Sylvestre, a teacher with experience in the schools of Marseille and Avignon, was sent to assist him. Timothée had requested the pope's approval of this assignment, and Sylvestre was granted an annual pay of 36 écus, or 108 livres.<sup>114</sup>

This papal school moved several times between 1733 and 1743, always in the parish of Santa Susanna, until it finally settled on Via della Purificazione. The new house was paid for by the community in Marseille, assisted by M. Digne, the Consul of France in Rome, and also by the Vincentians and the Carthusians in Rome.

In 1736 Sylvestre proposed to open a third class for another sixty pupils, but on 2 May, in an audience with Pope Clement XII, he was informed that there was no need to increase the number of classes, because the Fathers of the Pious Schools were able to take care of whatever classes were needed. Still, the Brothers of the Christian Schools remained in the Holy City, and the work begun by Brother Gabriel Drolin has continued there ever since. Meanwhile, in Avignon

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109. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 17, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 393.

110. *Letters*, 289 and 31.5.

111. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 144.

112. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 3.

113. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 192, note 1.

114. Alban, *Histoire de l'Institut*, pp. 32–33.

on 21 September 1728, Brother Gabriel, in the presence of Brother Timothée, Superior, made his vows according to the Bull of Approbation.<sup>115</sup> This document is preserved in the Generalate Archives.

Gabriel's last years were lived in the community of Auxonne, near Dijon. On one occasion, in a gesture of respect for Gabriel, Brother Timothée designated him to receive the triennial vows of four Brothers during the annual retreat in Avignon.<sup>116</sup> This is all we hear of the great veteran until his death on 11 January 1733; he was buried the next day in the mausoleum of the church of Auxonne. He was surely a man of great fidelity and zeal for the mission of the Institute.

### Brother Paul Narra

Another Brother who began association with the Institute during its very early period deserves to be a kind of footnote to this chapter on those who served for many decades. He is Brother Paul Narra. He was born on 6 October 1677 in Charenton, a suburb of Paris, and according to the *Catalogue* of the Brothers,<sup>117</sup> lived with the Brothers in Paris at the age of ten. He seems to have been an exception to those junior novices who either received the habit or went home in 1691 when De La Salle discontinued the program. It does not seem that he had been with the junior novices in Reims.

He may have been the young man mentioned by Blain who was teaching in the school of Saint Sulpice when De La Salle came to Paris and who joined the Brothers when they began to live in that parish.<sup>118</sup> It is also possible that he went home in 1691 and returned later. In any case, he received the habit on 8 December 1695 and made vows for all his life on 5 September 1699. The only other record of his life as a Brother is his signature with the community of Reims on the occasion of Brother Barthélemy's visit, 28 February 1717.<sup>119</sup>

Like the others considered in this chapter, Paul gave many years of service, but like so many of the early Brothers, he did it without leaving any documentary evidence; he died in 1751 at the age of seventy-four.<sup>120</sup>

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115. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 183.

116. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 185; Lucard, *Annales*, 2, p. 107.

117. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 33.

118. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 16, Cahiers lasalliens 7, pp. 285, 287.

119. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

120. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 33.

# Chapter Four

## The Second Generation

Rigault speaks of a second generation, twenty-three Brothers who made vows “for all their lives,” beginning in 1695 and extending to June 1705.<sup>1</sup> Their formulas of vows—of association to keep gratuitous schools, of stability, and of obedience—are in *Livret des Premiers Vœux*.<sup>2</sup>

For Rigault, the first generation included the twelve Brothers in *Livret des Premiers Vœux*<sup>3</sup> who made perpetual vows with De La Salle in 1694 and the other Brothers in the Institute before that year; these Brothers have been described in chapters one through three.

Rigault seems to limit his second generation to the twenty-three Brothers in *Livret des Premiers Vœux*, some of whom entered as early as 1691 (Jean-François) or as late as 1703 (Barthélemy). In addition to these twenty-three Brothers, however, thirty-six others are listed in the *Catalogue* who entered from 1690 up to and including 1705, the last year in which the twenty-three Brothers took vows.<sup>4</sup>

These dates (1690–1705) have been arbitrarily selected as cut-off points for the second generation that is discussed in this present chapter. The two groups within these dates give a total of fifty-nine Brothers who were not described in the previous chapter. Brother Paul Narra has been made an exception; he was considered in the preceding chapter as part of the first generation, because he was living with the Brothers in Paris as early as 1688.

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1. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 205.

2. Cahiers lasalliens 3, pp. 12–19.

3. Ibid., pp. 8–10.

4. Ibid., pp. 32–42.

In addition to the fifty-eight Brothers (leaving out Paul Narra) in *Livret des Premiers Vœux* and the *Catalogue*, there are at least fifteen other Brothers not in these records who are part of this period. They are known through references made in the early biographies and through the letters written by De La Salle, but their family names, their places of origin, and the dates of their birth, entry into the Institute, and death are often missing. Most of the stories of these Brothers will be inserted in the stories of other Brothers in this chapter.

These fifteen Brothers are:

- ♦ Germain and Lazare, whose stories were told in the last chapter with that of Jacques Compain;
- ♦ Remi, whose story will be told with that of Brother Joseph among those who entered before 1700;
- ♦ Nicolas, whose story will be told with that of Henri in the group of 1700;
- ♦ Dominique, Hilarion, Étienne, Médard, Albert, Mathias, Paulin, Séverin, and Louis, who will be included in the group of 1700;
- ♦ Claude (2nd), known only from his name as Director from 1701 to 1708 on the community list of Rethel, and
- ♦ Macaire, known only from the document of Brother Barthélemy's visit to the Versailles community in April 1717.

This makes a total of seventy-three Brothers in the study of this second generation. It does not, however, include all the Brothers of this time period, because no accurate records were kept of others—some persevering, some leaving—who lived and died during those years. There are, for example, Brothers listed in the first part of the manuscript *Obituary* in the Generalate Archives, a record of the deaths of Brothers which begins with the names of thirty-six Brothers (found in a private note of an elderly Brother) who died between 1684 and 1713. Sixteen of these names have already been included in the chapter on the first generation; the other twenty, who probably belong to the second generation, are not included here, because there is no information about them available thus far.

Of the seventy-three Brothers reported in this present chapter, all that is known about four is their vow formulas, which have been preserved in *Livret des Premiers Vœux*:<sup>5</sup>

- ♦ Brother Simon (Jean Bernard), who may have died or left before 1701, because another Brother Simon entered in that year.

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5. *Ibid.*, pp. 13ff.

- ◆ Brother François (Claude Foucquet), who may have died or left before 1706; another Brother François entered in that year.
- ◆ Brother André (Joachim Mercier), who may have died or left before 1709; another Brother André entered in that year.
- ◆ Brother Laurent (Jean Chehez), who may have died or left before 1711; another Brother Laurent entered in that year.

This chapter on the second generation, then, will tell the story of sixty-nine Brothers who were the nucleus of the Institute under the direction of De La Salle in the late 1690s and early 1700s. For most of them, there is little information, only the simple data of the *Catalogue*, but from what can be learned about the others a good picture of the Brothers with whom De La Salle worked can be known. During this period the Founder provided new staffing for about thirty schools or other educational programs (one for Irish *émigrés*, another for young adult men in a Sunday Academy, two for training teachers, and one for reforming delinquents). In addition to these new works, there were at least sixteen other foundations, some of them temporary, that had to be maintained.<sup>6</sup>

All these Brothers of the second generation made their contribution to the origin of the Institute, though only part of the record of their individual careers has been preserved. This chapter gives an account of the information about them that is available. The Brothers who entered after 1705 also played a part; chapter five will be devoted to them.

It is noteworthy that thirty-eight of the Brothers of this second generation made up a good percentage of the ninety-eight Brothers who were present when Brother Barthélemy visited the communities in 1717 to secure agreement for the General Assembly that would review the life and work of the Institute and elect a Superior. This Assembly became known as the Second General Chapter, the first one being the meeting of the twelve Brothers with De La Salle in 1694.

In 1717, fifteen of these Brothers of the second generation were among the twenty-two Directors of communities, and twelve made up the great majority of the sixteen Directors who composed that Assembly in 1717. Two others of this generation became the first two Superiors to succeed De La Salle: Brothers Barthélemy and Timothée. Chapter six will tell their stories.

It is of interest that the average age of the Brothers who joined during the lifetime of the Founder was around twenty-four, based on

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6. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, pp. 606–611.

a study of the 127 names in the *Catalogue* for whom the date of birth and the date of entry are given. This list, of course, is limited: it was begun in the year 1714 and does not include those who entered and who died or left before the list was started. More men (thirty-eight in number) entered before the age of twenty than those (twenty-three) who entered after the age of thirty. Those in their twenties numbered sixty-six.

The following accounts are based on the year of entry, beginning with fourteen Brothers who entered before 1700, followed by the stories of the twelve who entered in 1700 and, finally, by the accounts of the twenty-six who entered from 1701 through 1705.

## Brothers Who Entered Before 1700

Name	Diocese	Born	Entered	Died
Paul (2nd) (Pierre Raimbault)	?	?	?	1695
Thomas (Charles Frappet)	Reims	1670	1690	1742
Jean-François (Jean Bouqueton)	Reims	1673	1691	1740
Denis (Jean-Louis Guignard)	?	?	?	?
Philippe (Jean Police)	Soissons	1677	1692	1752
Ponce (Poncelet Thiseux)	Liège	?	?	?
Ambroise (François Blin)	Reims	1672	1693	1757
Michel (Jacques Lequeasse)	?	?	?	1705
Gérard (Gérard Drolin)	Reims	1676	?	?
Martin (Pierre Bernard)	Reims	1660	1696	1719
Athanase (Jean Richer)	?	?	?	?
Joseph (2nd) (Jean Le Roux)	Laon	1678	1697	1729
Grégoire (François Cortier)	?	?	?	1700
Gilles (Pierre Cluse)	?	?	?	1709

The question marks indicate that these Brothers are listed in *Livret des Premiers Vœux*, which gives only their vow formulas; other data are from the *Catalogue*. The inclusion of the date of death is a sign that the Brother persevered.

Three of these Brothers—Paul, Grégoire, and Gilles—died a relatively short time after their vows; no other information about them was available for this study.

Most of these Brothers undoubtedly made their novitiate in Vaugirard under the direction of De La Salle himself. Blain says that it was on 8 October 1691 that the novitiate opened there,<sup>7</sup> and it was moved to the *Grande Maison* in April 1698.<sup>8</sup>

## Brother Thomas

Brother Thomas (Charles Frappet) was born in the diocese of Reims on 18 December 1670 and entered the Institute on 5 August 1690; the *Catalogue* states, without giving the date, that he made vows forever as a serving Brother and perpetual cook, but these last two phrases are crossed out,<sup>9</sup> probably because later on Thomas made vows as a teaching Brother. A number of Brothers joined the Institute to be serving Brothers without this notation being made. In fact, there is only one entry among the Brothers who entered during De La Salle's lifetime which has such a notation on the vow formula; in that case it states that the Brother took the habit of a serving Brother.<sup>10</sup>

Aroz says that Thomas made the novitiate in 1692 in Vaugirard.<sup>11</sup> He reports that during the interval between Thomas's entry in 1690 and his enrollment in the novitiate, he was a person who collected alms for a charitable or pious cause (*quêteur*).

Blain says that De La Salle gave the habit to six novices on 1 November 1692 and that one of them was a serving Brother;<sup>12</sup> presumably this was Brother Thomas. If so, he was the first serving Brother in the Institute.

Maillefer says that in 1692 the Founder needed some Brothers who would be specially occupied in providing for the necessities of those who were teaching in the schools. This was a good way to take care of an onerous task that was incompatible with the ordinary work of the teachers.<sup>13</sup> The principal work of the serving Brother was to shop for the food and prepare the meals for the community. Sometimes the serving Brother would also be called to substitute, perhaps only as a monitor, for a Brother who had to be absent from school because of illness or for some other reason.

Chapter fifteen in the Rule of 1718 describes the way the serving Brothers are to behave; there is also a special vow formula for the serving Brother which omits the clause about conducting schools.<sup>14</sup> This chapter was printed in the Rule up to and including the edition

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7. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 10, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 315.

8. Ibid., chap. 14, p. 360.

9. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 33.

10. Ibid., p. 58.

11. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 192, note 1.

12. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 11, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 325.

13. Maillefer, Cahiers lasalliens 6, p. 94; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 76.

14. Cahiers lasalliens 25, pp. 59, 143.

in 1947, although in that edition the term “serving Brothers” was changed to “Brothers who are engaged in temporal affairs.”

De La Salle mentions serving Brothers in two letters to Brother Hubert, one in 1706<sup>15</sup> and another in 1710.<sup>16</sup> In the first he tells Hubert, the Director, to make sure that Isidore, a serving Brother, does not let his work take precedence over his religious observance or his recreation. In the second De La Salle explains that the serving Brother should take over the management of the household concerns of the community, so that the Director may not become preoccupied with them, but that the Director should make sure that the serving Brother always speaks respectfully.

The 1718 Rule of the Brother Director, which is the earliest copy of that Rule which has been preserved, mentions that the color of the robe of the serving Brother is brown.<sup>17</sup> In one of his descriptions of Brother Thomas, probably referring to the period of 1706, Blain says that he wore the habit of a serving Brother, which must mean that it was brown or grayish brown at that time.<sup>18</sup> It was not until the Twelfth General Chapter, in 1810, that the serving Brothers began to wear the same color robe as the teaching Brothers. It is clear that a serving Brother could become a teaching Brother; when Brother Thomas made his vows according to the Bull of Approbation in 1725, he made them as a teaching Brother.<sup>19</sup>

In the beginning the principal work of Thomas was to provide for the meals of the community in Vaugirard. He himself gave four examples of his work to Blain for the biography of De La Salle. Once, when some of the Brothers living at Vaugirard were sick, the Founder took Thomas with him to beg for some broth from the Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice.<sup>20</sup> On another occasion, during the famine of 1693, Thomas was sent out with the last bit of money to buy some cabbages. He joined a crowd of beggars at the door of a wealthy woman, a benefactor of the parish of Saint Sulpice, who was surprised to see him begging. When he explained the errand he was on, she called him aside and told him she would send food to the Brothers. She also spoke to the pastor, M. Baudrand, alerting him to the need of the Brothers.<sup>21</sup> Thomas also told Blain that he and the cook

15. *Letters*, 8.25, 32.

16. *Ibid.*, 12.1, 2, 6, 11.

17. *Cahiers lasalliens* 25, p. 160.

18. *Blain*, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 5, *Cahiers lasalliens* 8, p. 39.

19. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 192, note 1.

20. *Blain*, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 2, *Cahiers lasalliens* 8, p. 263.

21. *Blain*, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 12, *Cahiers lasalliens* 7, p. 336.

were often amazed during this period of famine to see how much food was left over after sixty people had eaten a meal at Vaugirard.<sup>22</sup>

On another occasion, Thomas recalled, De La Salle asked him to hire men to do some repairs on the house. When Thomas came to the Founder to get money to pay the workmen, apparently toward the end of several days of work, De La Salle had to confess that he had no money but that they should pray and trust God to provide. Thomas eventually, perhaps at the last moment, was amazed to find the exact amount he needed—40 écus, about \$1,200—in a place where he had no reason to expect to find it. Blain gives this account to illustrate a kind of miracle obtained by the Founder's reliance on Providence.<sup>23</sup>

In 1705 Thomas was one of the three or four Brothers sent to settle into the new house of Saint Yon. Thomas described to Blain how he wrote to De La Salle about the extreme poverty the community was suffering and received a reply from the Founder that by opening a boarding school at low cost, they could provide income to support the Brothers.<sup>24</sup>

Later on, when Thomas was preparing the grounds for planting vines, trees, and gardens, De La Salle stopped him and told him that such improvement of the property would attract other people to buy it, whereas if the property were left to look neglected, it would eventually be easier for the Brothers to buy it.<sup>25</sup> In these incidents the role of Thomas as a manager of temporal affairs is evident. De La Salle sometimes calls him the *économome* of the community.<sup>26</sup> In later documents he is entitled *pourvoyeur de la maison*, which may be best translated as the provisioner or business manager of the community.<sup>27</sup>

When the pastor of Saint Sulpice, M. de La Chétardie, refused to pay De La Salle the money owed to the Brothers, which was urgently needed for their food, the Founder realized that he himself was the cause of the pastor's ill will. So he went into hiding, telling only two or three of the principal Brothers that he would be on retreat at the monastery of the Discalced Carmelites. At the same time, De La Salle instructed Thomas to go to De La Chétardie, mention that the Founder had disappeared, and ask for the payment due the Brothers. The

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22. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 2, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 263–264.

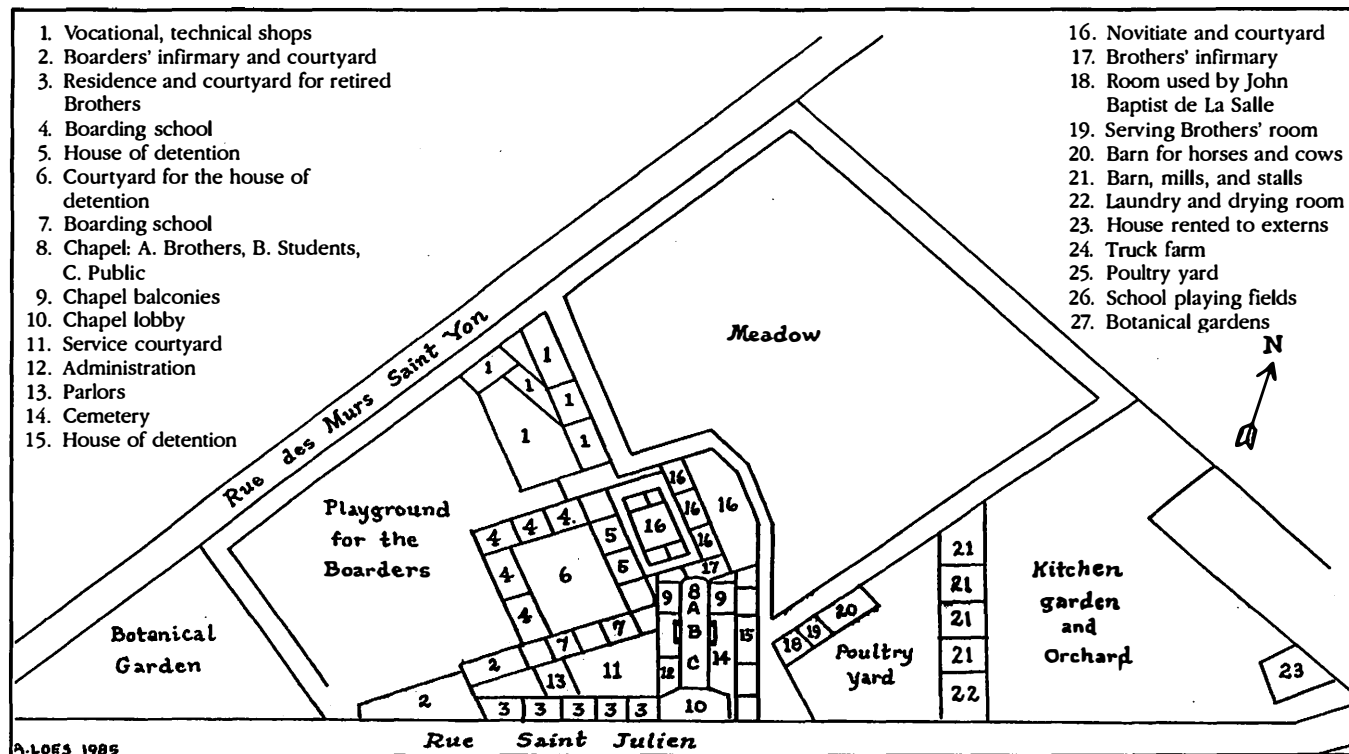
23. Ibid., pp. 262–263.

24. *Letters*, pp. 133–135.

25. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 2, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 264.

26. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 20.

27. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, pp. 201–203.



Plan of Saint Yon, reconstructed from eighteenth-century sources of information. Photo E. Rousset (*Iconographie*, 1979, plate 114).

Founder knew that the pastor had a special liking for Thomas. De La Chétardie gave the Brother the money.<sup>28</sup>

It was probably on that occasion, as described by Thomas, that the pastor, thinking that De La Salle was far away, suggested to Thomas that he take over the role of Superior, indicating that he would give Thomas his full support. Thomas told Blain that De La Chétardie urged him several times to make this move. Thomas, however, was only embarrassed by the proposal, for he loved De La Salle and honored him as a saint. He also knew that the other Brothers felt the same way and would never accept him as Superior.<sup>29</sup> Blain adds that although Thomas made a good appearance, he was "a very simple person, of limited intelligence, and a poor speaker who was unable to express himself well." Despite this, it is clear from the service Thomas rendered in the Institute for many years that he was skillful in practical matters and in business negotiations.

In 1706 De La Salle withdrew the Brothers from Saint Sulpice for three months because of the harassment of the writing masters, which was being tolerated by M. de La Chétardie. When the pastor finally realized that the schools could not function without the Brothers and agreed to the conditions set by De La Salle, it was Thomas who was sent to get the payment for the twelve Brothers. He even secured the stipends for the three months during which the Brothers were absent and the traveling expenses for their return.<sup>30</sup>

Following this incident, De La Salle sent Brother Thomas back to Saint Yon. When the pastor found out, he became angry and demanded his return, which De La Salle arranged in order to keep peace.<sup>31</sup> Gallego wonders if this behavior does not suggest that De La Chétardie had developed some kind of senility.<sup>32</sup>

If the event was a kind of defeat for the Founder, he rebounded shortly afterward. To improve the living conditions of the Brothers who were working in the school of Saint Sulpice, he wanted to move the Brothers out of the building on the rue Princesse, which housed both the school and the community. Surrounded by over twenty families who could witness almost every move they made, the Brothers had little or no privacy. There was also no courtyard attached to the house, which De La Salle always desired for the recreation of the Brothers. The Founder was unsure whether or not the pastor would

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28. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 5, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 39.

29. Ibid., p. 40.

30. Ibid., p. 43.

31. Ibid.

32. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 413, note 153.

be willing to have the Brothers move outside the parish to an area of more open space. Again, using Thomas because of his abilities and his relationship with the pastor, the Founder turned the whole matter over to the Brother.

In a short time, Thomas located a suitable house which was available on the rue Barouillère and which accommodated all the needs of the Brothers. De La Salle went to see it and told Thomas to make all the arrangements with the pastor and for renting the house from the owner. Thomas was successful in all the details. The Brothers resided there for the next fifteen years (1707 to 1722).

Thomas's role as Procurator of the Institute is mentioned in three of De La Salle's letters. In one to Brother Denis, dated 8 July and assigned to 1708 on the basis of details in the letter, De La Salle writes:

I am annoyed with Brother Thomas for treating you as you say. I will see to it that he changes his manner of acting in this matter. It is not true that I wrote to Brother Thomas what you told me about your needs, since I complained to him that he was not supplying what the Brothers require.<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, the Founder wrote to Brother Robert on 26 April, in a letter assigned to 1709 because of details in the letter:

Brother Thomas must give you what you need without so much fuss. It is not true that he has instructions to humble you, but you must act respectfully.<sup>34</sup>

Félix-Paul, commenting on this, suggests that Thomas may have been a bit stingy in his providing for the needs of the Brothers.<sup>35</sup> There is, in fact, a hint in both these letters of a limitation in the personality of Thomas which will be described later on.

In another letter, to Brother Joseph, dated 6 February and assigned to 1711, De La Salle writes:

Please see that Brother Remi is given what he needs. He mentioned to Brother Thomas that he required wool for a pair of stockings, for he had none, and for an undershirt.<sup>36</sup>

Brother Joseph, not Remi, should have written Brother Thomas for what Remi needed. The 1718 Rule of the Brother Director states

33. *Letters*, 4.4.

34. *Ibid.*, 44.17.

35. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 284.

36. *Letters*, 54.9.

clearly that for all the needs of the community, the Director will write to the Brother who is in charge of providing the Brothers' habits. This same Rule also mentions a form to be used in itemizing their needs.<sup>37</sup>

According to Aroz, Thomas was stationed at Saint Yon from 1705 to 1716 as the business manager for the Institute.<sup>38</sup> One official transaction was signed by him on 14 July 1712 for the lease of the new community house of the Brothers in the parish of Saint Nicaise in Rouen. This was the parish where Madame Maillefer was buried, the person who triggered the origin of the Institute by sending Adrien Nyel to Reims in 1679.<sup>39</sup>

On 2 November 1713, Thomas—at the request of De La Salle, who was in Grenoble at the time—began the investment of what eventually became 6,000 livres in the city of Rouen. This money would later be used for the purchase of Saint Yon.<sup>40</sup>

Thomas was in Calais for the visit of Barthélemy in March 1717, for on 18 March, Norbert, the Director, signed his name along with the other four members of the community in agreement for the General Assembly.<sup>41</sup> Blain says that Thomas was sent to Calais on the urging of the Brothers at Saint Yon because of his “haughty attitude and his insolent, imperious, brutal, and disrespectful behavior” toward De La Salle.<sup>42</sup> If it was true that Thomas did treat the Founder that way, he probably treated the Brothers similarly in his role as business manager for the community.

Blain cannot understand how Thomas could have acted this way, because Thomas had a great esteem for the Founder, regarded him as a saint, and always remained unalterably loyal to him, even when De La Chétardie suggested that Thomas take over De La Salle's place as Superior. Blain attributes Thomas's behavior to the fact that he was poorly endowed by nature and lacking in virtue. Blain tells all this twice, once at the end of the biography of the Founder,<sup>43</sup> then again in book four on De La Salle's spirit and virtues.<sup>44</sup> In both cases the author is illustrating the heroic virtue of the Founder, showing his affection for Brother Thomas and his reluctance to send him away, despite the way he himself was being treated.

37. Cahiers lasalliens 25, pp. 158–159.

38. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 192, note 1.

39. Cahiers lasalliens 42, p. 309.

40. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 1, p. 371.

41. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 408.

42. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 3, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 385.

43. *Ibid.*, book 3, chap. 16, pp. 155–156.

44. *Ibid.*, book 4, chap. 3, pp. 385–386.

Probably as early as 1717, Thomas is back at Saint Yon, recalled by the new Superior, Brother Barthélemy, to help in the administration of the Institute.<sup>45</sup> On 17 January 1718, De La Salle wrote a letter to Barthélemy from the Seminary of Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet, where he was on retreat. The Brothers were at that time in negotiation with the heirs of Madame de Louvois for the purchase of Saint Yon, and in his letter De La Salle mentions that Thomas visited him to obtain his signature for the transfer of the money to be used in the purchase of Saint Yon.<sup>46</sup>

Since the Institute had not yet received letters patent, equivalent to articles of incorporation, the deed for the purchase of the property (about seventeen acres) was signed by Brothers Barthélemy and Thomas on 8 March 1718; as such they became the personal owners of Saint Yon.<sup>47</sup> For a while, then, after the death of Brother Barthélemy on 8 June 1720 and until 1724, when the Institute became a legal corporation, Brother Thomas was the sole legal owner of Saint Yon.

On 3 June 1718, Barthélemy and Thomas had the Brothers of Saint Yon sign a document declaring their moral tie to the purchase of the property in the name of all the Brothers of the Institute. This document gives the sources of the funds used to purchase Saint Yon, with the exception of 800 livres,<sup>48</sup> which probably came from the community of Saint Yon. The total cost of the purchase, equivalent to at least \$150,000, was divided as follows (in addition to the 800 livres):

- ♦ 5,200 livres from the legacy of Rogier, really owed to the Founder from the Clément affair.
- ♦ 6,660 livres from several investments made by Thomas in the city of Rouen at De La Salle's request, beginning in November 1713, when the Founder was staying with the Brothers in Grenoble; this included 660 livres interest on the investments.
- ♦ 2,340 livres collected by the Director of Paris from the communities of Paris, Reims, Versailles, Guise, Boulogne, and Calais.<sup>49</sup>

There is no doubt that Thomas helped to put this sum of money together. De La Salle had made it clear that he wanted to have no part

45. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 366.

46. *Letters*, 125.2.

47. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 201.

48. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 222.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 221. This seems to presume that the sum of 15,000 livres was all paid at the same time. For another account of the payment in installments, see page 241 of this present volume.

in making the decision about the purchase of the property. It was undoubtedly for business like this, for which Barthélemy was not especially prepared, that the new Superior recalled Thomas from Calais.

Another occasion for the signature and probably the advice of Thomas was an agreement, 26 June 1718, which was signed but eventually canceled. This agreement with M. Charon, Founder of the General Hospice of Villemarie on the Isle of Montreal, Canada, was to establish Christian gratuitous schools in the said hospice and to form teachers for the country parishes of the diocese of Quebec, in accord with letters patent granted by the king in February 1718 for a union of Saint Yon with the General Hospice of Villemarie.<sup>50</sup>

Documents in the Generalate Archives in Rome record that Thomas was subsequently in Troyes, where he was involved in an extension of the Brothers' school in that city.<sup>51</sup> In 1720 he was not a capitulant to the General Chapter, but he received an obedience, dated 3 August, to attend as an observer because of his special status as the legal owner of Saint Yon.<sup>52</sup>

In 1722 Thomas negotiated the purchase of property on the rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs in Paris for the community of the Holy Spirit. His signature on that document was accompanied by those of Brothers Timothée, Superior, and Onésime, a member of the community. These same signatures were on another document, 14 August 1725, transferring ownership of this property, as well as other property in Paris, to Saint Yon. On the following day, 15 August, Brother Thomas, as Director of the Marseille community, made his vows as a teaching Brother in conformity with the Bull of Approbation.<sup>53</sup> According to Lucard, it was the Chapter that authorized him to make the vows of a teaching Brother, after which he was assigned as Director of the Marseille community and Brother Dosithée replaced him as Procurator of the Institute. Several months later, Thomas was called to Paris to be Director of the community of Saint Sulpice.<sup>54</sup>

In 1724 Thomas was the one who obtained from Maillefer the manuscript of his biography of the Founder. The author accused Thomas of violating his request not to make the document available to anyone without his consent. In fact, the Superior gave it to Blain, whose biography of De La Salle Maillefer considered to be in poor taste and showing little discretion.<sup>55</sup>

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50. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 203.

51. Ibid., p. 192, note 1.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 166.

In February 1727, Brother Timothée, Superior, sent Thomas to Rome as a companion of Brother Fiacre, Visitor, to thank the pope for the Bull of Approbation and to relieve Gabriel Drolin. These were the two Brothers who finally came to end Gabriel's solitary stay in that city for the past twenty-six years. Thomas returned to France after only a few months.

Back home, Thomas seems to have functioned again as business manager for the Superior. His signature is on a document of agreement made in July 1727 with the pastor of Saint Sever in Rouen which exempted the Brothers from the usual contributions to the parish and granted them the right to have a cemetery to bury the Brothers. Again, on 7 March 1729, his signature is on another contract, this time with Cardinal de Bissy for the establishment of a Brothers' school in Meaux.

In 1734, now as Director in Paris, he assisted at the transfer of the relics of De La Salle from the church of Saint Sever to the chapel at Saint Yon.

In 1738 he was involved with the transfer of other relics, those of Saint Yon himself. Timothée negotiated the transfer of these relics through the good graces of the archbishop of Paris, longtime friend of the Brothers in Marseille, over the reluctance of the pastor of the church of Saint Clément to share these relics. In the document which verified the portions of the skull, other bones, the saint's chalice, and a piece of red silk, the pastor emphasizes that it was "Brother Thomas, general procurator," who several times presented the request of Brother Timothée. It was Thomas who brought the relics from the church of Saint Clément to the chapel at Saint Yon.<sup>56</sup>

This is the last documentary evidence of the illustrious career of Brother Thomas. He died at the age of seventy-two on 24 February 1742 in the community he helped establish, of the Holy Spirit in Paris. Perhaps the first serving Brother in the Institute, he was very close to the Founder for almost thirty years, involved in day-to-day operations as the chief business manager of the Institute for more than forty years, probably active in securing legal recognition for the Brothers, surely not a man without his faults but a loyal person nonetheless, who revered De La Salle and was unashamed of having the whole story of his own role become part of the Institute's written history.

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55. Maillefer, *Cahiers lasalliens* 6, p. 17; *Two Early Biographies*, pp. 19–20.

56. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, pp. 327–328.

## Brother Jean-François (2nd)

Jean Boucqueton entered the novitiate on 24 May 1691 and was given the name of Brother Jean-François. He is the second Brother of record with that name, the first Brother Jean-François being the first Brother to die, in 1684. Nothing is known about the family of this second Brother Jean-François, except that they lived in the town of Vendresse, which was in the diocese of Reims. He made vows for all his life on the feast of Saint Joseph, 19 March 1696.<sup>57</sup>

His first assignment on record is as Director of the community and school in Laon in 1699, which began a career of being Director most of his life.<sup>58</sup> He is next recorded among the eighteen Brothers in Paris who on 7 June 1704, along with De La Salle, were being sued by the writing masters for conducting schools illegally. He was not the Director of the community in Paris, but he may have been a teaching principal in one of the four schools in the parish of Saint Sulpice. The pastor of the parish, M. de La Chétardie, made no effort to defend the Brothers, so they lost the suit and were fined—De La Salle, 100 livres; each of the eighteen Brothers, 50 livres, a total equal to at least \$10,000, quite a bit for them, since they really had no money at all.<sup>59</sup>

His next assignment of record is back in Laon as Director from 1707 to 1710.<sup>60</sup>

When Barthélemy made his visit to the community of Saint-Denis in April of 1717, Jean-François was there as Director.<sup>61</sup> He attended the Chapter of 1717 and participated in the election of Brother Barthélemy as the first Superior; he also participated in the election of the first two Assistants, Brothers Jean and Joseph, and helped to draw up recommendations for the revision of the Rule.

It is Jean-François's copy of the Rule of the Brother Director that has been preserved among all those sent to the communities in 1718.<sup>62</sup>

He was Director of Saint-Denis for the next seventeen years.<sup>63</sup> After Brother Barthélemy died in 1720, Jean-François attended the General Chapter of that year, which elected Brother Timothée as the

57. Cahiers lasalliens 3, pp. 33, 13.

58. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

59. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 102.

60. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

61. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 352.

62. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 162.

63. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

second Superior. Likewise, he attended the Chapter of the Brothers in 1725 for the solemn reception of the Bull of Approbation and the renewal of vows according to the Bull. Again, as Director of Saint-Denis, he would have been present in 1734 for the solemn transfer of the relics of the Founder from the church of Saint Sever to the new chapel at Saint Yon. He was also part of the Chapter that followed, when Timothée was reelected as Superior and two new Assistants were chosen, Brothers Irénée and Étienne. Jean-François was replaced as Director of Saint-Denis in 1734 and may have retired in that community, for he is listed as having died there in 1740.<sup>64</sup>

Here, then, was a good Director for a community. Just from the incomplete record available, he served in that capacity for twenty-four years in the two communities of Laon and Saint-Denis. Other Brothers also served many years as Director; perhaps this means that there were not many among the Brothers who were capable of exercising that role adequately. De La Salle made good use of what the Lord provided.

## Brother Denis

Brother Denis (Jean-Louis Guignard) is one of the Brothers whose vow formulas are in *Livret des Premiers Vœux*; he made vows for all his life on 9 December 1697. He is not listed in the *Catalogue*, which means that he either died or left the Institute before 1714. The only other sources of information about him are three letters written to him by De La Salle.<sup>65</sup> The research of Brother Félix-Paul given in the critical edition of the letters is the source of the following information.<sup>66</sup>

The first of the letters is dated 30 May 1701; based on the content of the letter and the fact that it seems to have been enclosed in another letter, Félix-Paul concludes that Denis was sent to the community in Rethel to replace the previous Director, Pierre Garnier, who died on 2 January 1701. Nothing further is known about that Brother Pierre.

Another view might be that Denis replaced Brother Pierre in the work of the school but not as Director and that his letter was enclosed with the one to Brother Claude, who was Director. Brother Claude was one of the twelve Brothers who took vows with De La

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64. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 458; Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 33.

65. *Letters*, 3, 4, and 5.

66. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 33–44.

Salle in 1694. It is of interest that Denis, not Claude, may have been the Director, since Brother Claude had been in the community from 1699 and is listed on the community register as Director in 1704. The register of the community of Rethel during the eighteenth century is, in fact, less than complete. Claude continued as Director in Rethel until 1708, after which there is no record of him; he is one of the twelve who took vows in 1694 who is presumed to have left the Institute.

Denis is on the register of the community of Rethel until 1704 and may have stayed there until 1705. He was put in charge of the school in Darnétal in 1706, with Brother Robert as his companion. He seems to have left Darnétal after the school year 1707–1708; there is no further record of him. It is uncertain whether he persevered in the Institute.

The other two letters to Denis, written in 1708, are rather long. De La Salle takes care to answer the numerous items in the letter Denis wrote to him. He assures Denis that he is concerned about him, his needs, his health, and his fidelity to the duties of his life as a Brother. It is evident that Denis has a need for patience in school and in community but that he is a person of good will.

The fact that Denis kept these letters might be taken as an argument in favor of his perseverance. It could be that Denis died as a Brother and that the letters were found among his personal effects after his death.

## Brother Philippe

Brother Philippe (Jean Police) is one of the many early Brothers about whom little is known, except for one assignment, even though he was one of the twenty-two Directors in 1716. He was a native of Soissons, born on 16 July 1677, and entered the Institute at the age of fifteen on 2 September 1692. He made vows for all his life on 14 June 1699.<sup>67</sup> There is no record of his work except as Director of the community and school in Moulins, first when Brother Barthélemy visited there on 16 December 1716<sup>68</sup> and again on records of the Moulins community for a continuous seventeen years until 1734.<sup>69</sup>

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67. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

68. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

69. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

It is possible that Philippe was the founding Director of the school in Moulins<sup>70</sup> and that he is the Brother, described by Blain, who was requested by the vicar-general, M. Languet, to give two or three demonstration lessons in catechism for the young priests and other catechists of the diocese.<sup>71</sup> In both these roles it is clear that he was undoubtedly an extremely competent Brother.

Philippe was one of the six Directors unable to participate in the election of Barthélemy in 1717, probably because he and the other five, in whose communities there were only two Brothers, had to keep their schools in session. Neither does his name appear on the list of those who attended the Chapter in 1720, when Timothée was elected to succeed Barthélemy as Superior.<sup>72</sup> Only thirteen Directors attended that Chapter, all of them from the northern communities except the two from Avignon and Grenoble.

The Directors of three southern communities (Moulins, Mende, and Les Vans) were also unable to attend the solemn reception of the Bull of Approbation in 1725,<sup>73</sup> but Philippe was one of those, along with a few others, including Gabriel Drolin, who made his vows according to the Bull at the novitiate in Avignon in September 1728.<sup>74</sup>

He was present in 1734 for the transfer of the Founder's remains from the church of Saint Sever to the chapel at Saint Yon; he also was a member of the Chapter that followed this event<sup>75</sup> but not at the Chapter of 1745. It is probable that Philippe retired to the Avignon novitiate in 1734.

The date of his death is listed in the *Catalogue* as 1 October 1752 in Avignon.<sup>76</sup> He was seventy-five. A footnote indicates that the signatures on his two vow formulas are different. The one in 1699 reads Police; the other in 1728 reads Poiret. Rigault maintains that the signature on the formula of 1728 is written by a hand crippled by age.<sup>77</sup> Police is the correct name. He was a Brother from the north (Soissons) who spent most of his life in the south, probably adapting to the language of the south and ending his life there, a faithful Brother who contributed to the foundation of the Institute by being prepared to go wherever he was sent.

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70. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 300.

71. Blain, vol. 2, chap. 8, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 69–70.

72. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 41.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 185, note 3.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

76. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

77. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 185, note 3.

## Brother Ponce

*Livret des Premiers Vœux*, the primary document for information about Brother Ponce, records that Ponce Thiseux (according to Aroz, a misspelling of the name Thiteux)<sup>78</sup> made perpetual vows at Vaugirard on 26 September 1696 and that he was called Brother Ponce. His vow formula is the sixth one in the booklet of the vow formulas which follow those of De La Salle and the twelve Brothers who made their perpetual vows in 1694. It can be reasonably judged, then, that Ponce entered the Institute in Vaugirard two or three years earlier than the year he made his perpetual vows, that is, in 1693 or 1694.

It is possible that he was born in the town of Chevigny, in the diocese of Liège, and that he had a younger brother who also entered the Institute around the year 1700, whose brief story will be told in the next group of the second generation.<sup>79</sup>

The next documented fact about Ponce is related by Blain in book four of his life of the Founder as an example of De La Salle's patience.<sup>80</sup> The incident occurred while the Brothers were still living at Vaugirard, therefore before 1698, when De La Salle moved the novitiate to the *Grande Maison*.

Ponce was the Director of the community on the rue Princesse. De La Salle, in Vaugirard, was in need of money, and he wrote a note to Ponce asking him to give Brother Thomas, the Procurator, a sum of money which the Founder had previously entrusted to Ponce. Surprisingly, Ponce refused to give over the money. When Thomas reported this to De La Salle, the Founder made the remark, "God will not bless him."<sup>81</sup> The next thing they knew, Ponce became very sick. Refusing the doctor's advice, he insisted on following the suggestion of friends who told him that the remedy for his illness was some gold powder. De La Salle tried to dissuade him from this course of action but to no avail. Despite Thomas's arguments against it, De La Salle told the Procurator to buy the gold powder. This required as much money—seventeen livres—as would have bought a week's supply of food for the Vaugirard community. The remedy made the poor man worse. De La Salle then gave him a simpler medicine ordinarily prescribed by the doctor, and Ponce recovered.

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78. Cahiers lasalliens 42, p. 13, note 1.

79. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 256.

80. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 3, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 378.

81. Ibid.

The story illustrates not only De La Salle's patience but also the limited personalities of some of the Brothers on whom he had to rely, even for key positions. Ponce's was evidently a harsh personality, tough on himself and tough on others, but he was a good school man, someone who could take charge of the important schools in the parish of Saint Sulpice.

De La Salle may have relieved Ponce of his position on that occasion, but it was only temporarily, for there is sound evidence that he was the Director of the school in Laon for the school year 1702–1703.<sup>82</sup> This conflicts with Blain, who has Ponce in Paris at that time, responsible with Brother Michel, Director of Novices, for the brutal treatment of the young Brothers that led to the effort to replace De La Salle as Superior. This discrepancy may well be an example of the confusion Blain sometimes displays regarding the dating of events.<sup>83</sup>

In any case, Ponce was back in Paris in 1704, for his name is listed as one of the Brothers in the trial of the writing masters.<sup>84</sup> He also was among the Brothers who signed the lease for the house on the rue Princesse on 5 July 1704.<sup>85</sup> It is significant that Ponce's name is the first after De La Salle's on the document of the trial and also the first of the four Brothers on the lease. If the harshness of Ponce was one cause of the trouble with De La Chétardie and the cardinal in 1702, his respected ability as a school man had him back in a key position as early as 1704.

When the Brothers had to leave Paris a short time later as a result of the writing masters' trial, De La Salle again showed his respect for Ponce's ability by sending him to Darnétal, a suburb of Rouen, to size up the prospect of the Brothers' taking over a school there. The Founder did this apparently before agreeing to the request from M. Deshayes to send Brothers.<sup>86</sup> Ponce and a Brother Robert, whose story will be told, took over the school in February 1705.<sup>87</sup>

Ponce did not stay there very long; he was a point man, it seems, for De La Salle. The opportunity arose for De La Salle to move into Rouen itself, a move he seems to have desired in order to locate a center for the Institute in place of Paris. In a letter to Brother Gabriel in Rome dated 4 September 1705, De La Salle wrote that he had

82. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 197, note 5.

83. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 356.

84. Cahiers lasalliens 40, p. 173.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

86. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 2, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 16.

87. *Letters*, p. 136.

placed the novitiate in Rouen and that the Brothers were teaching in schools of that city, "where Brother Ponce is stationed."<sup>88</sup>

What De La Salle is saying so briefly is explained by Lucard, who was later Director of the schools in Rouen.<sup>89</sup> Around the time that Ponce and Robert were establishing the Lasallian school in Darnétal, the bishop of Rouen, Jacques-Nicolas Colbert, and the president of the Parliament of Normandy, Nicolas-Pierre Pontcarré, began to make plans to bring the Brothers to the city of Rouen itself. In May 1705, De La Salle brought two Brothers to make this move. One was Brother Dominique for the school in Darnétal,<sup>90</sup> so he could bring Ponce to Rouen as Director of the new community established there. The other was Brother Martinien to help out in Rouen.<sup>91</sup> Eventually there were ten Brothers in the Rouen community conducting four schools.

De La Salle evidently foresaw the prospects for the several schools in Rouen as well as a center for the novitiate. It is significant that he brought Ponce to Rouen to get the program of the schools off to a solid start. But, again, Ponce did not stay long in this assignment either. He was sent south, to the city of Avignon, possibly as early as January of 1706,<sup>92</sup> to replace Albert, who opened the school in Marseille that month.<sup>93</sup>

Lucard says that before going south, Ponce was also briefly in charge of the new school for the parish of Saint Roch in Paris, which opened providentially at about the same time that the Brothers were being driven out of the parish of Saint Sulpice as a result of the trial with the writing masters.<sup>94</sup>

Shortly after Ponce was in Avignon, De La Salle asked him to go to Mende to open a school for the bishop of the town, François de Piencourt, who had written to De La Salle for Brothers. De La Salle did not have the manpower at the time, but he told Ponce to go and get the school started. On 1 April 1707, De La Salle wrote to Gabriel<sup>95</sup> that Ponce had opened a school in Mende but had fallen ill. Evidently in a short space of time, by himself Ponce had demonstrated the success of his school, for the bishop wrote to De La Salle on 8 April 1707 in part:

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88. *Ibid.*, 19.4.

89. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 175.

90. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 78.

91. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 265.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 129, note 6.

93. *Letters*, 21.15

94. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 181.

95. *Letters*, 26.

I could not be more pleased than I am with the Brother you sent to me, who has begun while waiting for another to help him in the instruction of our youth.<sup>96</sup>

This was what De La Salle had no doubt desired when he had sent just one Brother to begin a school. Ordinarily, the Founder wanted to have more than two in a community, permitting that number only because he hoped that a school would grow or that another school would be needed, so that he could have as many as five Brothers living together for the sake of community life.

Again Ponce did not stay long in Mende. Brother Antoine Partois was sent to replace him, and Ponce went to Avignon as Director; it was there that he received a letter from Bishop Piencourt, dated 7 November and addressed to “The Very Venerable Brother Ponce, Superior, Visitor of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.”<sup>97</sup>

The bishop’s use of the term “Visitor” is significant. He may be borrowing from ecclesiastical terminology; it is not clear how soon the Brothers may have used it among themselves; it first appears in print in the Rule of 1718.<sup>98</sup> In De La Salle’s assignment to Brother Joseph for this role in the north of France, he does not use the term. He only states that Brother Joseph is responsible for visiting the communities that he lists, saying, “I enjoin the Directors of these communities to receive this Brother in this capacity and inform him of all that takes place in their community.”<sup>99</sup> Such a written assignment for Ponce has not been preserved, but it is certain that De La Salle would have given one to him.

Ponce remained as Director of the community in Avignon while he also functioned as the Visitor for the communities and schools in the south: Avignon, Marseille, Valréas, Mende, Alès, Grenoble, Mâcon, Moulins, and eventually Les Vans. This role is made clear in De La Salle’s letters to Brother Mathias, whose story will be told. Here are examples from these letters probably written in 1707 and 1708:

Instead of telling your problems to people outside the community, tell them to Brother Ponce or write to him if he is not at Mende. I have delegated him to attend to all that needs to be done for the welfare of the Brothers in that area. . . . You may be sure, my very dear Brother, that acting on what Brother Ponce tells me, I will do all that is best for you. So, let him know all

96. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 6, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 46.

97. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 241, note 1.

98. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 27; Cahiers lasalliens 11, pp. 74–75.

99. *Letters*, 52(a).

your difficulties and your thoughts. In doing so you will find that God will give you his blessing.<sup>100</sup>

In reply to your two letters, my very dear Brother, I have to tell you that I have written to Brother Ponce asking him to go to Mende and put things in order. I think that he will be able to transfer you and put you in his community.<sup>101</sup>

Another example of the role that De La Salle expected of Brother Ponce is mentioned in a letter to Brother Gabriel, dated 14 February 1710, in which he says that he asked Ponce to visit the bishop of Cavaillon, Joseph de Guyon de Crochans, in order to express the Founder's gratitude for his kindness to Brother Gabriel in helping him to get assigned to a papal school.<sup>102</sup>

The next and last mission of record for Ponce is in 1711. De La Salle had received a legacy from a priest who willed the money in order to support Brothers for a school in Les Vans. The priest died in September 1710, and De La Salle sent Brother Ponce to receive the money for the Brothers who would be assigned to the school. The municipal records of 3 January 1711 state that Brother Ponce Thiseux, Visitor of the Brothers, came to this city and offered to assign the Brothers; he requested the city council to take care of the house for the Brothers and the school.<sup>103</sup> Ponce assigned Brother René as Director and Brother Maximin to assist him in the school; they began the work at the beginning of the school year in October 1711.

Ponce must have left the Brothers before 1714, because his name is not on the list compiled in that year. Poutet suggests that Ponce may have been among those discouraged by the opposition to De La Salle from the Jansenist opponents of the Jesuits in Marseille.<sup>104</sup>

Blain gives a less charitable description of Ponce's departure from the Institute:

There was the notorious Brother Director of Paris, of whom we have spoken previously, harsh on himself and even more so on others, who, together with the Master of Novices, by inflicting such indiscreet and exaggerated penances [on the young Brothers] had given rise to the great persecution that was the start of all the others. He had been sent by De La Salle to open the

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100. *Ibid.*, 57.3, 4, 6.

101. *Ibid.*, 64.1.

102. *Ibid.*, 27.5.

103. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 369.

104. Poutet, *Le XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 345.

school in Mende and had also been commissioned to visit the houses of the Institute in Provence. This Brother allowed himself to be influenced by all that was happening and left the Society. His desertion was neither sudden nor unforeseen. It took place with the deliberation of a man who had been planning it for a long time. Before leaving the house, he took care to set aside as much money as he could. When he had a considerable sum to line his pockets, he departed with the embezzled funds.<sup>105</sup>

Lucard gives yet another version of Ponce's departure.<sup>106</sup> He says that De La Salle ordered Ponce to go to Rouen in 1713 to live under the direction of Brother Dosithée, who was in charge of the school community. This may have been done as a penance. Félix-Paul suggests that Brother Timothée, whose story will be told, was assigned to Avignon in 1713 to replace Ponce as both Director of the community and Visitor of the region.<sup>107</sup> This adds credence to the departure date of 1713 but only as an hypothesis.

One letter written by Ponce has been preserved among the letters sent to Brother Mathias.<sup>108</sup> Dated 4 June 1708, it directs Mathias to go from Mende to Avignon, a change that had been suggested by De La Salle.<sup>109</sup> Ponce asks Mathias to bring with him a packet of all his letters, other documents of the Society, and some papers he had left with a local priest. He also asks Mathias not to tell anyone that he is leaving but to give his regards to two couples who were, Félix-Paul thinks, persons outside the community that De La Salle, in three letters, had warned Mathias not to visit.<sup>110</sup>

Certain remarks by De La Salle in letters to Gabriel<sup>111</sup> suggest that Ponce may have intercepted some of the letters that were sent through the community of Avignon. On 12 May 1710, De La Salle asks Gabriel to write to Ponce. This is unusual, since the Brothers were not supposed to write to one another. The Founder may have been worrying about Ponce and considering that correspondence with Gabriel would help him. He says that Ponce could send him some classroom prayer books and adds, "I would very much like you to write to him." Ponce was in Avignon at the time.

105. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 10, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 92.

106. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 299.

107. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 171.

108. *Letters*, 64(a).

109. *Ibid.*, 64.1.

110. *Ibid.*, 62.5; 63.8; 64.12.

111. *Ibid.*, 28.19 and 32.1

A fitting postscript to the story about Ponce may be the one letter which, according to Félix-Paul,<sup>112</sup> De La Salle may have written to him; it is tentatively dated January 1706, when Ponce was the Director in Rouen:

You should be most careful, my very dear Brother, not to speak so haughtily, as you tell me you sometimes do. The Spirit of God does not allow that sort of talk.

So let humility and gentleness be always evident in what you say. "A soft answer," says the Wise Man, "breaks down the hardest nature." Nothing will make you more pleasing to God and men than these two virtues.

But if you ought to speak to your Brothers with humility and gentleness, you ought to be no less careful to act in the same way toward people outside the community. Saint Paul requires this of all Christians.

So never rebuff anyone; that gives very bad example. On the contrary, speak politely, which is altogether in keeping with the Spirit of God.

You must be on your guard against speaking too freely with your students, for this takes away all respect.

In class you must avoid levity, for it does a lot of harm.

It is against our rules to teach catechism in church.

Women are not to be admitted [in the school].

Students are not to be given anything to drink.

You are not just to ask for a Mass on the feast of Saint Nicolas, but offer a stipend for one to be said.

I am, my very dear Brother,

Devotedly yours in Our Lord,

De La Salle.<sup>113</sup>

This letter follows the usual style of the Founder's letters of counsel in response to the Brothers' monthly report to him of their conduct and their conscience. The content of De La Salle's letter follows the topics that are in the letter of the Brother. This letter to Ponce reveals both the effort Ponce was making to be honest with De La Salle

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112. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 314.

113. *Letters*, 49.

and the Founder's forthright response. Its brevity need not disappoint, since it must be put in context with the personal, intimate relationship that De La Salle had with each of the Brothers to whom he wrote, also the considerable number of letters that the Founder had to write to the Brothers each month, not to mention all his other official correspondence and business.

Brother Félix-Paul says that De La Salle must have been deeply hurt when this Brother left the Institute but that the Founder maintained his spirit of kindness and his insurmountable optimism based on his trust in God. De La Salle, he adds, "employed the men that God sent to him, as long as they could be good instruments of Divine Providence."<sup>114</sup>

## Brother Ambroise

Brother Ambroise (François Blin) was born on 20 January 1672 in the parish of Warcq, which is near the town of Mézières and in the diocese of Reims.<sup>115</sup> He belonged to a fairly well-to-do family; in 1733 he and his sister, Jeanne Blin, were able to endow the Brothers' community in Mézières with their inheritance, probably property in the Warcq area.<sup>116</sup> In the records of the community in Mézières, a note written by Brother Timothée, Superior, to Brother Barthélemy Legendre, Director of the community, asks Barthélemy to take care of the property and of Ambroise's sister during her lifetime.<sup>117</sup>

Brother Ambroise was evidently blessed with good health, because he lived to the age of eighty-five.<sup>118</sup> He must have had a fairly good education also, because before entering the Institute on 21 May 1693 at the age of twenty-one, he held an elected civic position (*prévoté*) for the village of Warcq,<sup>119</sup> probably representing Warcq in the town of Mézières. Lucard, who had access to the early records of the novitiate, says that Ambroise was the only one who entered in 1693.<sup>120</sup> How the religious names of the Brothers were chosen is not clear, but in his case a good guess might be the fact that the role he

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114. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 259.

115. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

116. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 271.

117. Ibid.

118. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

119. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 271.

120. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 89.

had in his native village of Warcq was similar to the role of Saint Ambrose in Milan before he became a bishop.

Brother Ambrose must have impressed De La Salle, for within two years of his entry, he was allowed to make vows for all his life on 29 May 1695,<sup>121</sup> which was the feast of the Most Holy Trinity. A few others did this, but it was not the general rule, most waiting for five or more years.

The earliest documentary evidence of any assignment for Ambrose is his name on the list of the eighteen Brothers on the indictment in the suit of the writing masters against De La Salle and the Brothers who were conducting five schools in Paris in 1704.<sup>122</sup> Then there is a lapse of information until 1716.

On 4 December 1716, Ambrose was one of five Brothers whom De La Salle called together to make a major decision for the good of the Institute. The other four were François, Director of the boarding school (*pension libre*), Dosithée, Director of the school community in Rouen, and Charles and Étienne, teachers at Saint Yon. The Founder explained to them the need to hold a General Assembly of the Directors of all the communities to review and update the Rule of the Brothers and to elect a new Superior. His proposal was reluctantly accepted, sad though it was for them to imagine De La Salle's retiring from his leadership role. It was decided to have Brother Barthélemy visit all the communities in order to obtain the Brothers' agreement to the proposal.

They drew up a document to this effect:

We, the undersigned, Brothers of the Christian Schools, assembled in the house of Saint Yon to take care of what is most urgent for the good our Institute, recognize that for almost a year M. de La Salle, our Founder, has been retired here because of illness during that time, and we judge it proper and even necessary to commission Brother Barthélemy, who has been assigned to guide our Institute for several years, to make a visit without delay to all the houses dependent on the Institute, in order to learn all that is transpiring there and the manner in which they are being conducted, so that later it can be decided, with the principal Brothers of our Society, what means should be taken to establish, preserve, and maintain union and uniformity in the Institute, to draw up and determine regulations, and to provide at the same time for the general government of the Institute in an assembly

121. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 12.

122. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 375.

which he will state will be held in the house of Saint Yon from the feast of Ascension to the feast of Pentecost.

(signed) Brother François, Brother Dosithée, Brother Charles, Brother Ambroise, and Brother Étienne

I believe proper what the Brothers have resolved above, the days, the month, and the year, in the house of Saint Yon.

(signed) De La Salle

We the undersigned, Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rouen, appointed by the archbishop, approve of Brother Barthélemy's being absent during the months ahead in order to do what M. de La Salle and the Brothers have judged necessary. I believe it is as necessary as they do.

(signed) Blain<sup>123</sup>

The document was initialed by two lawyers, Luce and Sana-don,<sup>124</sup> all of which leaves no doubt that De La Salle was the true son of a lawyer.

On this document Ambroise is listed as the Director of the detention center (*pension de force*) in which adults with some social status were placed by the king instead of being sent to the public prison.<sup>125</sup> This was no doubt a difficult assignment but one consonant with the role Ambroise had in his village before he entered the Brothers.

Ambroise was among those who signed the document, 7 May 1717, of Barthélemy's visit to Saint Yon at the end of his tour of the communities. He was relieved of the job at Saint Yon when Barthélemy became Superior; Brother Dosithée, whose story will be told later, was appointed Director of the detention center early in 1718.<sup>126</sup>

Ambroise's signature is on the document attesting to the burial of De La Salle in the church of Saint Sever on 8 April 1719, so he may have stayed in Rouen, if not at Saint Yon, in the community of the Brothers working in the schools of that city.<sup>127</sup>

There is no documentary evidence of the assignment of Ambroise between 1718 and 1723, but the records of the city of Marseille indicate that in 1723, at the age of fifty-one, he began residence there which was to last until the end of his life, some thirty-four years later.

123. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, pp. 162–163.

124. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 182.

125. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, pp. 348–350.

126. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 417.

127. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 278.

He was to fulfill what De La Salle had hoped for in his letter to Gabriel Drolin on 16 April 1706: that the Brothers would soon be conducting all four parish schools of the city.<sup>128</sup> All the schools in Marseille had been closed by an epidemic in 1720. Bishop Belsunce, who was unable to oblige De La Salle in 1706, set about to fulfill his hope in 1723 by writing to Brother Timothée, Superior, for Brothers to take charge of the schools for the poor in each of the four quarters of the city. Timothée selected Ambroise to be the Director of this project.

Rigault says that Ambroise was chosen as “one of the Brothers most imbued with Lasallian traditions and most capable in the role of Director.”<sup>129</sup> He took residence in the parish of Saint Laurent, where the Brothers had first begun work in the city in 1706. Within two years he had Brothers in each of the four schools: in Saint Laurent early in 1723, on 29 May 1723 at the Cathedral, on 10 October 1723 in Saint Martin, on 1 January 1724 in Notre-Dame-des-Accoules, and on 2 October 1724 in the parish of Saint Ferréol. He also had arranged with the Confraternity of Notre-Dame-de-Bon-Secours for a suitable residence for the Brothers working in all four schools.<sup>130</sup> Three other Brothers, in a separate community, were working in the shelter for the poor in the city.<sup>131</sup>

In June 1726, Ambroise returned to Saint Yon for retreat and renewal of his vows according to the Bull of Approbation, along with other Brothers who had not been able to attend the solemn reception of and renewal of vows according to the Bull in August 1725.<sup>132</sup>

Early in 1727, he and the eleven Brothers of the community prepared and signed a petition to the city council of Marseille for official recognition of the Brothers as a religious congregation. The fact that the Institute had received letters patent from the king and approbation by the pope made this possible. City council approval, registered in the municipal records of 6 March 1727, enabled the Brothers to share in the rights and privileges granted by the city, including some financial assistance which other recognized religious groups enjoyed.<sup>133</sup>

Brother Ambroise probably retired in the Marseille community, for it was there that he died. The date in the *Catalogue* is 23 November 1757;<sup>134</sup> Rigault gives the date of 23 November 1756,<sup>135</sup> which he took from the parish records.

128. *Letters*, 22.9.

129. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 175.

130. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, pp. 428–429.

131. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 176.

132. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 461.

133. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 176.

## Brother Michel

The earliest document about Brother Michel (Jacques Lequeasse) is the record of his perpetual vows at Vaugirard on 2 June 1697.<sup>136</sup> It is probable, therefore, that he had entered the Institute at least two or three years earlier at Vaugirard. The earliest assignment on record for Brother Michel, then only twenty-three years old, is Director of Novices at the *Grande Maison* in the summer of 1699, following the death of Brother Jean-Henri.<sup>137</sup>

Gallego wonders why De La Salle did not assign one of the twelve who made perpetual vows in 1694 to this important responsibility.<sup>138</sup> Blain says that De La Salle made mistakes in selecting some of the Brothers for leadership.<sup>139</sup> Blain, interested in getting the Founder canonized, compares De La Salle's experience to the similar experience of Saint Francis of Assisi in his selection of Elias to be the leader of the Franciscans.

It is quite possible that De La Salle assigned the most reliable Brothers to the responsibility of Director in the communities located away from Paris, where he himself generally resided, counting on his best men to maintain the Rule without his own presence. He relied on himself to support observance of the Rule in Paris, especially in the house of the novitiate, where he could assist in the direction of the novices. It also must be kept in mind that the Founder was often short of qualified men for the work of leadership.

Blain describes Brother Michel as an austere person who was extremely hard on himself and given to the practice of continual mortification. Unfortunately, he was also inclined to be hard on others, and he lacked prudence. These traits led Michel, as Director, to treat the novices too severely. When present, De La Salle was able to counsel the Director to exercise more restraint, and he could encourage the novices who might feel they were abused. Michel, however, was a hard personality, and he did not seem able to respond to the Founder's guidance.

On one occasion when De La Salle was absent for several days visiting other communities, the Director's severity in administering

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134. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 32.

135. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 175.

136. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 14.

137. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 18, Cahiers lasalliens 7, pp. 399ff.

138. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 306, note 23.

139. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 14, Cahiers lasalliens 7, pp. 356–357.

corporal penance to two of the novices led them to bring their complaints to the pastor, M. de La Chétardie.

Blain says that this was just what the pastor was looking for, a cause to seek the replacement of De La Salle as Superior of the Brothers, so that he could take charge of the Brothers himself.<sup>140</sup> The pastor was shown the welts that the penance had given the young men, and he had them prepare a written statement of their grievances.

Blain follows this incident with another similar event in his account, though Gallego<sup>141</sup> maintains that the two incidents probably occurred the other way around. In either case, Brother Ponce, principal of the parish school, who was also a harsh personality, inflicted severe corporal penance on another novice, who was assigned to do practice teaching in the school. This young man also went to the pastor, showed the marks that Brother Ponce had made on him, and prepared his statement of grievances.

What followed is the well-known story of the cardinal's becoming involved, sending his vicar-general to an assembly of the Brothers in Paris, and announcing that De La Salle was replaced as Superior. The first meeting took place in November 1702. The Brothers, of course, revolted, not just the older ones, though most of them may have been in school, but the novices themselves, who were angry not at the Founder but at his two appointees.

Blain says that one of the "principal Brothers" came forward and spoke to the vicar-general on behalf of the assembly, pointing out that the Brothers elected De La Salle and were quite pleased with his leadership. This Brother could have been Nicolas Vuyart, Jean Jacquot, or Antoine Partois, who were stationed in Paris at the time. Gabriel Drolin was in Rome. Jean, as Supervisor of classes, may well have been present because of his position, whereas the other two may have been in school. Blain says that this Brother approached the vicar-general and spoke calmly to him, but then when his words did not seem to impress the vicar-general, he raised his voice so that all the Brothers would know that he was objecting to what this official had announced. This Brother may have also been the one who spoke up at a later meeting to make sure that the special arbitrator, M. Madot, put the final compromise in writing before they all set off for the conciliatory meeting with the cardinal.

At one point Michel stood up to speak, perhaps in his own defense as well as for De La Salle. This enraged the vicar-general, who

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140. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 19, Cahiers lasalliens 7, pp. 401ff.

141. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 356.

angrily told him, “What! You dare to speak? You unworthy one, undeserving of the responsibility you have?”

Eventually, over several weeks of maneuvers and in spite of the desires of De La Chétardie and the efforts of at least one other ecclesiastic, a certain compromise and calm ensued but not without creating a degree of turmoil in the community.

Meanwhile, stimulated by the course of these events, Michel induced another Brother, probably Brother Gabriel Drolin’s brother, Gérard,<sup>142</sup> to abscond with him from the community at night through a window, go to the Trappist monastery, and seek admission. The abbot, who knew De La Salle, wrote to the Founder to find out if he approved of the two men’s transferring to him. De La Salle asked the abbot to send them back.<sup>143</sup> Michel’s companion soon left the Institute, but De La Salle continued to take care of him, as will be told in the story about Gérard.

Michel obviously had to be relieved of his job as Director of Novices, but he persevered in spite of his troubling behavior, and De La Salle stayed with him. The Founder, obviously not inclined to have him in charge of others, sent him as a serving Brother to be in charge of the temporal affairs, probably including the work of cook, for the community in Chartres. There he died at the age of twenty-nine in the epidemic of purple fever (typhus) on 27 May 1705.<sup>144</sup> He is a sad example of the less-than-perfect young men whom De La Salle accepted into his care and whom he tried his best to help as they served the purpose of the Institute. Michel, nonetheless, persevered to the end of his life.

## Brother Gérard

Mention has already been made of Brother Gérard (Gérard Drolin) in the story of his brother, Gabriel Drolin. Gérard was born on 18 December 1676, about twelve years after Gabriel.<sup>145</sup> He followed his older brother into the Institute, probably in 1693, and made his perpetual vows on 9 December 1697, just twelve days short of his twenty-first birthday.<sup>146</sup>

142. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 380, note 156.

143. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 70, note 4.

144. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 88.

145. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

146. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 15.

There is no record of his assignments before 1702. It was during the vacation period of that year that De La Salle sent Gabriel and Gérard to Rome to start a school for poor boys. It seemed like a good move to send the two brothers together for their mutual support, but it did not work out that way. Gérard, described later by De La Salle in a letter to Gabriel as “one of the most fickle people I know,”<sup>147</sup> left his brother alone in Rome and returned to France, probably within a year.

Gérard returned by way of Avignon, most likely in the company of Bishop Joseph-François Gualtieri, who had befriended the Drolin brothers when they arrived in Rome.<sup>148</sup> Lucard says that Gérard traveled in his religious habit, and because he was with the bishop, he was introduced to the papal treasurer in Avignon, Jean-Pierre Madon de Châteaublanc.<sup>149</sup> This distinguished person, through the wishes of his wife, had already made contact with De La Salle for teachers to open a school for poor boys in Avignon. Blain says that he and others who met with Gérard were impressed with the Brother.<sup>150</sup> The school was opened in 1703.

Gérard returned to Paris, and he is possibly the one who became involved in the bizarre escape from the community with the unhappy Director of Novices, which has already been described in the previous story about Brother Michel. The two of them had applied for admission at the local Trappist monastery. The abbot, Jacques de La Cour, sent the two Brothers back.<sup>151</sup> Subsequently Gérard left the Institute.

It is probable that this incident of the aborted attempt to enter the Trappists is what the Founder is referring to in his letter of 23 December to Gabriel Drolin. The year of the letter is not indicated; Félix-Paul assigned it to 1704. “I do not think that you should involve yourself in Brother Gérard’s dispensation from his vows,” the Founder wrote. “He is one of the most fickle people I know. He is not suited for the world and would have been well suited for the Trappists. I am very sorry that I dissuaded him from joining them. He never knows what he wants to do.”<sup>152</sup>

De La Salle makes two other references to Gérard in his letters to Gabriel. On 26 November 1706,<sup>153</sup> he mentions that the Brothers have

147. *Letters*, 15.4.

148. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 55.

149. Lucard, *Annales de l’Institut*, 1, p. 110.

150. Blain, vol. 1, book 2, chap. 17, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 396.

151. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 70, note 4.

152. *Letters*, 15.4 and 5.

153. *Ibid.*, 25.

a house not far from where Gérard is living and that he, the Founder, has arranged for Gérard to be the sacristan there. He adds that this will help Gabriel's brother work out his salvation, that Gérard is now behaving very well, and that he comes regularly for confession.

The other reference is in a letter to Gabriel of 14 February 1710,<sup>154</sup> which only says that Gabriel's letter to De La Salle came through Gérard, probably because of postal problems existing at the time. There is no further record of Gérard Drolin that has come to light so far.

## Brother Martin

Brother Martin (Pierre Bernard) entered the Institute on 3 November 1696, just ten days before his thirty-sixth birthday. Gallego points out that he was probably among the oldest Brothers during De La Salle's lifetime; he was only nine years younger than the Founder.<sup>155</sup>

It is probable that Gallego considered Brother Hilarion Sceillier, whose story will be told later on, an exceptional case, because Blain states that he entered around the age of seventy.<sup>156</sup>

There are three documents with Brother Martin's signature, one recording Brother Barthélemy's visit to Saint Yon on 7 May 1717, on which Martin's is one of nine signatures, and a second document, dated 3 June 1718. This is the document with the fourteen names of the residents of Saint Yon attesting to the fact that they participated in the purchase of the property from the heirs of Madame de Louvois.<sup>157</sup> On this document eleven names are followed by the assignment they had in the community. Brother Martin is listed as the shoemaker, which suggests that he was a serving Brother, though not definitively, because only three had no special job, and some with assignments may also have been teachers in the classes for the boarders.

The third document, dated 26 June 1718, contains eighteen signatures authorizing Brothers Barthélemy and Jean Jacquot to enter into an agreement with M. Charon, founder of the General Hospice of Villemarie in Montreal, to establish a teacher-training program for the rural parishes of the diocese of Quebec.<sup>158</sup> This project was never carried out and will be described in the story of Brother Barthélemy.

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154. *Ibid.*, 27.

155. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 242.

156. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 79.

157. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 417.

There is no certitude about the date of Martin's death, though the *Catalogue* does state that he died at Saint Yon. Gallego suggests that he died at the age of fifty-eight or fifty-nine, that is, in the year 1719 or 1720, probably because his name does not appear on any available documents after those years.<sup>159</sup>

## Brother Athanase

Brother Athanase (Jean Richer) is one of the Brothers whose vow formulas are in *Livret des Premiers Vœux* but not in the *Catalogue*, which means that he died or left the Institute before 1714, the year the *Catalogue* was begun. He made vows for all his life on 8 September 1699. He was Director of the community of Chartres in 1705, as evidenced by his signature on the death certificates of two Brothers who died that year in the epidemic of typhoid fever: Brother Nicolas Falon and Brother Michel Loyson.<sup>160</sup> This incident has been described in the story about Jacques Compain.

Athanase could have been the procurator in the community of Saint Yon in 1709, when Brother Hubert sent a request to him for holy pictures to give as rewards to students.<sup>161</sup> This is all the information available about Brother Athanase.

## Brother Joseph (2nd)

Brother Joseph (Jean Le Roux) was born on 18 February 1678 in the small town of Lerzy, about twelve miles north of Laon in the diocese of Laon. He entered the Institute in 1697 and made his novitiate at Vaugirard.<sup>162</sup> He made vows "for all my life" on 10 May 1700.<sup>163</sup> The earliest record of his assignment is on the list of the eighteen Brothers teaching in Paris when the writing masters sued De La Salle and the Brothers in 1704.<sup>164</sup> He is also one of the four Brothers who signed the lease for the house on the rue Princesse on 5 July 1704.<sup>165</sup>

158. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 203.

159. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 539.

160. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 206.

161. *Ibid.*

162. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 34.

163. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

164. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 375.

165. Cahiers lasalliens 42/1, pp. 290–294.

When the Brothers dispersed from Paris in 1706, Joseph was assigned to replace Brother Ponce as Director of the community in Rouen in the parish of Saint Nicolas, which was for the Brothers teaching in the schools of that city.<sup>166</sup> He continued in Rouen until 1710.<sup>167</sup> As the Director in Rouen, he also had jurisdiction over the Brothers in Darnétal, as De La Salle indicates in letters to Brother Robert.<sup>168</sup>

Blain tells an interesting story involving Joseph when he was probably living with De La Salle in Saint Yon, before the Founder brought the novices to Paris during the famine of 1709.<sup>169</sup> The Founder was without food and money, so he asked Joseph and another Brother to go to the Carthusian monastery nearby to ask for help. They were turned down and told that the Brothers should never have come to Rouen if they did not have the wherewithal to live without begging. They then went to several other houses in Rouen (Blain says about a dozen) but were not successful; they returned with only seven or eight livres (about seventy or eighty dollars). They did, however, find a packet of documents on the street, which they turned over to De La Salle. The Founder, seeing that these documents belonged to the Carthusians, remarked, "Blessed be God! Evidently he wants them to give us some help." And so they did, generously, when the Brothers brought the packet to the monastery.

In 1708 De La Salle had assigned Brother Joseph the task of Visitor to visit the communities of Rethel, Guise, Laon, and Reims while continuing to be Director of the community in Rouen.<sup>170</sup>

De La Salle had already given Brother Ponce such authority for the communities in the south,<sup>171</sup> though we do not have the document assigning him to that work. Evidently the Founder knew that the supervision of all the communities was too much for himself alone; he also was moving in the direction he always had in mind, of giving the Brothers full responsibility for their own lives.

On 28 March 1709, Brother Joseph, in his role as Director of the Rouen community, signed the certificate of burial for Brother Louis.<sup>172</sup>

166. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 221.

167. *Ibid.*

168. *Letters*, 40.1 and 9; 42.2; see also Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 39.

169. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 2, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 265–266.

170. *Letters*, 52(a).

171. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 241, note 1.

172. *Ibid.*, p. 39, note 5.

In that year also, he received a renewal of his assignment to visit the same four communities plus the community in Troyes.<sup>173</sup>

It is not completely clear, but it seems that Joseph resided for a brief period in Paris and then went to Reims in 1711.<sup>174</sup>

In 1710 Joseph was in Troyes as Visitor to cope with a problem concerning the residence of the Brothers and their school because of the death of the pastor, M. Le Bé, on 15 July. This priest had also been rector of the seminary and had been living there, giving his parish house to the Brothers and the school. The new pastor, M. Le Jeune, needed the parish house for his own residence. When Joseph informed De La Salle of the problem, the Founder responded on 23 December:

I received your letter at midday today, my very dear Brother. On Saturday I will set out for Troyes. Don't leave; wait for me there. I will be there on Monday, and we will discuss all the business concerning that town and your proposals about those properties at Reims. Don't tell anyone, not even Brother Albert, that I have to go there. I will do my best to bring things to a successful conclusion and to everyone's satisfaction.<sup>175</sup>

De La Salle was able to solve the problem by appealing to the bishop, Denis-François Bouthillier Chavigny, on the basis of an agreement in the original contract made in 1703.<sup>176</sup>

Underneath the Founder's signature on this letter is a prayer, written in Joseph's handwriting, which reveals the quality of his piety:

My God, I promise you that I will keep my resolutions with the help of your grace. I wish to do always all that I can to be obedient in all my actions in order to please you. I will try to speak in a low voice, not to allow myself to follow the first movement of nature, to have much kindness toward our dear Brothers on the occasions that will occur, to keep a close watch over my tongue when I will be obliged to speak outside the house, and to abandon myself to the guidance of God under all circumstances. O my God, my loving Savior, I place all these resolutions under the care of the Most Blessed Virgin, of the glorious Saint Joseph, and of my holy guardian angel.<sup>177</sup>

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173. *Letters*, 52(b).

174. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 221–222.

175. *Letters*, 53.

176. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 278.

177. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 223.

Early in February 1711, Joseph received a letter from De La Salle which reveals the type of business the Founder entrusted to him and the supervision that Joseph received while in his role as Visitor:

I received your three letters all at the same time, my very dear Brother, and am answering the most urgent of them. It seems advisable that Brother Placide go to Guise. I am having Brother Fabien set out with the young Brother from Mende who is to take Brother Placide's place. In two or three years he will be better able to profit from the novitiate than he is at present, and he will become a capable teacher.

Let Brother Fabien have the horse to come back here; he will be at Reims on Tuesday evening.

Brother Dosithée would not have written you if you had not first written to him, nor would the Brothers from Guise. I don't know why you write like this to the Brothers just according to whim. It is not a wise thing to do. There should be no correspondence like that from one community to another; it is unbecoming among Brothers like us. If you wish to prevent it, you must not do it yourself.

It is to be hoped that M. Bourgeois has learned how to sew and how to cut hair well. This is important.

I don't know if a young man, a stonemason, has called to see you since I left. If he still seeks admission, you must put him off until after Easter. But they must not both enter at the same time.

Please see that Brother Remi is given what he needs. He mentioned to Brother Thomas that he required wool for a pair of stockings, for he had none, and for an undershirt.<sup>178</sup>

The "young Brother" mentioned in the letter is Benoît (Robert Esbrayat), whose story will be told with those Brothers who entered in 1711. The Brother Remi in the letter is listed in the records of the community of Rethel in 1706; his family name was Frapant, but he is otherwise unknown.<sup>179</sup> He either died or left the Institute before 1714, for his name is not in the *Catalogue*, which was started that year.

In November 1711, De La Salle renewed Joseph's assignment as Visitor with much greater authority, not only by adding several more communities but by giving him responsibility to represent the Institute with anyone concerned:

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178. *Letters*, 54.

179. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 232.

Nous soussigné, Prêtre Docteur en Theologie Supérieure des freres des  
 Ecoles Chrétiennes, déclarons à tous qu'il appartiendra que nous enuoyons notre  
 cher frere Joseph de la dite Société pour visiter les Maisons de Moulins, de Dijon,  
 de Troyes, de Reims, de Rethel, de Laon, de Guise, de Calais, de Boulogne,  
 de Rouen, de St Yon, de Darnétal, de Chartres, de Versailles, et de Saint Denis  
 dépendantes de la dite Société des Ecoles Chrétiennes. en fin dequoy nous auons signé  
 ces présentes. fait à Paris ce dix sixieme Novembre mil sept cent onze

De La Salle

Obedience, dated 16 November 1711, appointing Brother Joseph as Visitor of certain houses of the Institute. Photo E. Roussel (J. B. de La Salle; *Iconographie*, 1979, slide 238, plate 53).

I, the undersigned, Priest, Doctor of Theology, Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, declare to all to whom it may concern that I send our very dear Brother Joseph of the aforesaid Society to carry out the visitation of the communities of Moulins, Dijon, Troyes, Reims, Rethel, Laon, Guise, Calais, Boulogne, Rouen, Saint Yon, Darnétal, Chartres, Versailles, and Saint-Denis which are dependent on the Society of the Christian Schools.

In testimony of this, I have signed this document.

Given at Paris, this sixteenth day of November 1711.

De La Salle<sup>180</sup>

The Founder was probably preparing for his own journey to Marseille and the other communities in Provence. He was giving rather complete authority to Brother Joseph for the communities in the north, except for Paris, where Brother Barthélemy was stationed with the novices. He certainly showed great confidence in Brother Joseph.

While De La Salle was in the south from 1712 to 1714, Joseph seems to have initiated a move to have the community in Reims receive letters patent.<sup>181</sup> It is possible that in the beginning his intention was not limited to Reims but was to include other houses of the Institute. The need for considerable funds as a condition for legal recognition prevented this extension. In the meantime, probably for the

180. Letters, 52(c).

181. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, pp. 144, 150–152.

broader purpose, in 1712 he secured testimonials of approval from the bishops of Chartres, Troyes, and Laon.<sup>182</sup> Though Brother Joseph most likely had the support of M. Louis de La Salle in Reims, the plan for Reims never did materialize, though it is not clear why it did not.

There is no question about the loyalty of Joseph in making this move. It is conceivable that he did it against the background of what was happening in Paris: the effort of M. de Brou to take over the Institute in Paris and separate it from the rest of the Brothers. In obtaining letters patent for the community in Reims, he was preparing to give the Institute a solid base there if things in Paris got worse. He was exercising the extended authority De La Salle had given him in the assignment of 1711.

No doubt Joseph was in regular contact with Brother Barthélemy, and he probably was one of those who urged Barthélemy to call De La Salle back to Paris;<sup>183</sup> he most likely was the initiator and one of the signers of that letter.<sup>184</sup>

Brother Joseph was probably also in contact with M. François Vivant, the vicar for Cardinal de Noailles, concerning the effort by De Brou to revise the Rules of the Institute.<sup>185</sup> It may not be a coincidence that the Brothers of Paris, Versailles, and Saint-Denis (the last two communities being under the jurisdiction of Brother Joseph) wrote their letter to De La Salle on 1 April and that on 4 April M. Vivant told the Brothers that the cardinal did not want to make any of the changes in their Rule which were being urged by De Brou.<sup>186</sup>

Lucard says that when De La Salle returned to Paris in 1714, Barthélemy urged him to go to Reims to visit with Brother Joseph, because Joseph had helped Barthélemy on many serious matters while the Founder was away. Lucard also notes that the Founder spent a week in Reims, which must have been quite an experience of renewing old memories for him.<sup>187</sup>

Certainly the Brothers appreciated the sterling qualities of Joseph, for they elected him as one of the two Assistants who were requested by Barthélemy, the new Superior, at the General Chapter of 1717.<sup>188</sup> The Chapter renewed his assignment as Assistant in 1720 and in

182. Cahiers lasalliens 11, pp. 375–376; also pp. 84–89; a photocopy of the testimonial from the bishop of Troyes is in Cahiers lasalliens 40/2, p. 179.

183. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 502.

184. Cf. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 150.

185. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, pp. 510–511.

186. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 15, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 149.

187. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, pp. 134–135.

188. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 11.

1725.<sup>189</sup> Joseph was also greatly esteemed and loved by the principal benefactor of the Brothers of Rouen, the President of the Parliament of Normandy, Nicolas-Pierre de Pontcarré, who said to him, "When you are at Saint Yon, it is for me a reason to come there often."<sup>190</sup>

Brother Joseph was active as Assistant in the business of the Institute until his death in 1729,<sup>191</sup> despite the fact that he was never in the best of health. Blain says that he was subject to serious illnesses. For fifteen years he had some kind of a respiratory problem which made him cough almost continually, sometimes violently.<sup>192</sup> It was while he was on business for the Brothers that this problem caused his death. In the cold season of the year, he had traveled from Rouen to Paris to negotiate with Cardinal de Bissy for the Brothers to teach in Meaux. On 20 February he became seriously ill, and he died the next day,<sup>193</sup> though the *Catalogue* lists the date of his death as 18 February.<sup>194</sup>

Lucard, in the second book of *Annales*, gives an appropriate conclusion to this short biography of a great Brother:

This religious possessed in a special way a strong character which manifested itself in a perfect balance of personality: he was outgoing, and his words almost always expressed goodness and kindness. To him can be applied with accuracy the words of the Gospel, "Blessed are the gentle, for they will possess the world."<sup>195</sup>

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189. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 111.

190. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 37.

191. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 16, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 153–154; Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 108–109, 115, 125.

192. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 28.

193. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 148–149.

194. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 34.

195. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 38.

## Brothers Who Entered in 1700

This section includes the stories of the Brothers who are listed in the *Catalogue* as having entered in 1700, though there is some question whether all of them entered in that year; they are presented here in the order in which their names are listed in the *Catalogue*. Brother Timothée also entered in 1700, but his story will be told in a separate chapter.

Name	Diocese	Born	Entered	Died
Siméon (F. Pajot)	Amiens	1672	1700	?
Charles (Michel Crest)	Grenoble	1679	1700	1758
Vincent (Louis Thiseux)	Liège	1674	1700	?
Théodore (Simon Sceillier)	Paris	1680	1700	1755
Barnabé (Jean Jannin)	Reims	1683	1700	1740
Norbert (André Desbouvés)	Soissons	1676	1700	after 1720
Clément (Jacques Gatelet)	Reims	1684	1700	1753
Hubert (Gilles Gérard)	Reims	1683	1700	1759
Robert (Denis Maubert)	Rouen	1673	1700	1734
Alphonse (Pierre Marie)	Chartres	1677	1700	1727
Jude (Jean-Nicolas Noulet)	Laon	1683	1700	?
Henri (2nd) (Joachim Pelard)	Guise	1683	1700	1721

The stories of five other Brothers—Albert, Mathias, Paulin, Séverin, and Louis (2nd)—will be added to these. Their names are not listed in the *Catalogue*, but their stories can be garnered mostly from the letters of De La Salle.

Nothing is known about Siméon and Jude, except that Siméon made vows for three years; Jude, for all his life, but both are listed in the *Catalogue* as having left the Institute.

### Brother Charles

Brother Charles (Michel Crest) was born on 5 April 1679 in the town of Livet, in the diocese of Grenoble, and entered the Institute “around the year 1700.”<sup>196</sup> It is of interest that Charles came from the diocese of Grenoble, though the Brothers did not open their school there until October 1708<sup>197</sup> nor in nearby Avignon until 1703.<sup>198</sup> The *Catalogue* states that he made vows for all his life but does not give the date.

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196. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 34.

Charles began his teaching career in Laon, as the history of that community seems to indicate.<sup>199</sup> It was while he was at Laon that an incident occurred in which he was the principal actor and became the topic of talk among the Brothers. The event is recorded in the history of the community:

On the Monday before Ash Wednesday, [Brother Charles] happened to meet one of his pupils who was truant. He tried to take him in hand, encouraging him gently to come to school for the catechism lesson. The poor youngster, trying to escape, fell under the wheel of a cart loaded with grain, which ran over him across his stomach. He passed out and was for a long time speechless, but to everyone's amazement he was not injured, and he came back to school the next day, Mardi Gras, for his lessons.

To encourage the Brothers and the people to thank God for this miracle, Brother Charles insisted that several people present at the accident tell M. Guyart, the pastor of the parish of old Saint Pierre, that they saw two angels hold up the wheel of the cart. Perhaps it was instead Charles who had this vision, for he was a virtuous and holy religious with the zeal of a seraph. He was so filled with love for God that he was known to give pious exhortations two or three times a day to Brothers and boarders at Saint Yon without ever feeling that he had said enough.

The other Brother at the school in Laon, who was with Charles when the incident occurred, said that several people who were present ran after him, yelling, "Stop the Brother; hit the Brother!" and that he answered in all simplicity as he went on his way, "He certainly deserves it!"<sup>200</sup>

Another incident attributed to Charles is described by Blain in a chapter about the special care Divine Providence takes of the Christian Schools.<sup>201</sup> This also happened in Laon, where Charles began his teaching, although Gallego points out that the source of this story places it about 1697, that is, before Charles is listed as entering the Institute.<sup>202</sup>

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197. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 364.

198. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

199. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 191.

200. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

201. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 97.

202. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 440, note 123.

One day he noticed that the floor of his classroom, on the second story, was shifting a little and seemed likely to collapse. He asked the Brother in charge what he should do and was told to continue class without fear. He did as he was told with childlike obedience. Eventually the school day ended, Charles led his class down the stairs, and as the last two pupils left the building, the floor collapsed. (The record does not mention any angels on this occasion.)

Charles was assigned to Rethel in 1706 and became the Director of the community and school in 1708, where he remained until 1711.<sup>203</sup> He is quite probably the anonymous Director who received a confidential letter on the topic of silence from the Founder, which merited to be kept anonymous; it is included in an anthology of letters published by the Brothers during the eighteenth century for the edification of all:

I am at a loss to know why there is so little order in your community, my very dear Brother.

Is it not because you do not keep silence? Examine yourself on this point. Complaints are made that you speak too loudly.

Be careful, then, to keep silence strictly. You know very well that silence and recollection are two means of becoming interior.

Take care not to talk in the streets.

See that you walk in a dignified manner. Say the rosary devoutly. This is the way to guard your eyes and control your thoughts and particularly to win from God the grace to carry out your school work well.

As you know, there have always been complaints that you walk much too fast.

It would have been much wiser not to have replied further to the priest who spoke to you in the street after you had told him that Brother Joseph was back in Paris again.

Take care never to get into arguments with anybody, for in doing so you can offend against charity, which should be outstanding among you.

I am, my very dear Brother,  
Devotedly yours in Our Lord.  
De La Salle<sup>204</sup>

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203. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 191–192.

204. *Letters*, 71.

This letter, it must be remembered, is in answer to a monthly letter which all the Brothers wrote to De La Salle in confidence. It was a type of spiritual direction, and its succinct style must be seen in the context of De La Salle's overall relationship with the Brothers. As with the other letters in the anthology, the selection is probably only an excerpt from the whole letter, made to illustrate a particular topic—in this case, silence.

In 1716 Charles was one of the Brothers at Saint Yon whom De La Salle called together on 4 December to formulate and sign the document commissioning Brother Barthélemy to visit all the communities in France in preparation for a General Assembly.<sup>205</sup> He is listed as a teacher among the six Brothers called for this meeting. Three months later, he was Director of the community and school in Guise when Barthélemy made his visit there on 7 March 1717.<sup>206</sup>

As Director of Guise, he attended the General Chapters of 1717,<sup>207</sup> 1720,<sup>208</sup> 1725,<sup>209</sup> and 1734,<sup>210</sup> holding the role of Director of Guise, therefore, for at least seventeen years. In 1747 he signed the report of a meeting at Saint Yon as Director of that community.<sup>211</sup>

The last note on record is in the *Catalogue*, where his death is recorded as occurring in Reims on 20 December 1758.<sup>212</sup> He lived to be seventy-nine years old, and he must have been a colorful personality, from the little evidence available, but a good administrator withal, one of those whom God sent to De La Salle and who labored loyally with the Founder for the foundation of the Institute.

## Brother Vincent

Brother Vincent was born on 1 November 1674 in the town of Chevigny, diocese of Liège (Belgium); he entered the Institute around the year 1700 and made vows for all his life, though no date is given.<sup>213</sup> There is confusion over his family name, which is difficult to read in the *Catalogue*; it could be Louis, or Thiss, or Titeux. Félix-Paul settles

205. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 406.

206. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

207. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 409.

208. Ibid., 2, p. 41.

209. Ibid., p. 108.

210. Ibid., p. 147.

211. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 192.

212. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 34.

213. Ibid.

for the possibility that it is Thiseux and that he is a younger brother of Brother Ponce,<sup>214</sup> whose story has been told in the previous section.

If what Félix-Paul surmises is true, Vincent was in Laon in 1702 or 1703. When Brother Barthélemy made his visit to the school community in Rouen in March 1717, Vincent was a member of that community. The *Catalogue* has an entry that he left the Institute that year.<sup>215</sup> He is an example of a Brother who gave several years of service at the origin of the Institute but did not persevere.

## Brother Théodore

Brother Théodore (Simon Sceillier) was born on 22 November 1680 in the town of Villiers-le-Bel, in the diocese of Paris, and entered the Institute in 1700.<sup>216</sup>

Théodore's younger brother, Jean, entered the Institute a year after his brother and was given the name Dominique. There is no record of him in the *Catalogue*, because he died before 1714, but he was such an unusual Brother that Canon Blain included a summary biography of him in the supplement to his life of De La Salle.<sup>217</sup>

Actually, five members of this family eventually became Brothers, so it is fitting that the story of all of them be told together. Théodore's father, whose baptismal name is not given in any of the documents, was the third member of the family to join, in 1705, and was given the name Hilarion. He was a farmer of great piety. To illustrate this piety, Blain tells the story of a certain Calvinist landlord who threatened to increase the rent on the family farm if the father did not remove the image of Our Lady from above the door of his house. The father preferred to pay the higher rent rather than to take down the image.

The circumstances of the father's entering are quite unique. When he came to ask De La Salle for admission to the Institute, the Founder told him that he could join the Brothers but only on condition that he bring with him his other two sons who were still at home. The father explained that these two were as eager as he was to enter the Institute but that they had to remain home to take care of their sister. She had wanted to enter a convent, but the family was unable to provide the necessary dowry. It was no problem for De La Salle to

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214. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 256.

215. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 34.

216. Ibid., p. 35.

217. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 76–80.

arrange for the sister to enter one of the convents in Paris, where “she persevered until death, giving great edification to everyone.”

So, in 1705, the father and his two sons entered the novitiate at Saint Yon. André, age thirty, became Brother Pacôme; Louis, age twenty-six, became Brother Gervais.<sup>218</sup> The father was probably around seventy years of age.

By the time these three entered the novitiate, Brother Dominique, the youngest son, age twenty-four, had been appointed Sub-Director to Brother Barthélemy, Director of Novices. Quite a situation: the youngest son in charge of his father and two of his older brothers!

Blain describes Dominique as “the most devout and virtuous” of the four brothers. In fact, when the young Brother entered the novitiate, probably in the *Grande Maison* in the year 1698, his thirst for prayer and penance was so great that it exhausted his strength and undermined his health, despite the fact that he was “a strong and robust young man.”

For fear that “his absorbing concentration on God” would completely ruin his health, he was taken out of the novitiate and assigned to teach the youngest class in one of the schools under the direction of the Brother in charge of training the new teachers. This was most likely in Paris under the direction of Brother Jean Jacquot. The idea was to distract him from concentration on God by the demands of teaching a class of fifty or sixty squirming seven-year-olds. It did not work out as planned. By that time Dominique had acquired such a degree of contemplation that he could take care of the class without interrupting his prayer, but his health continued to deteriorate.

He was given another job, not mentioned in the story, and it seemed that his health improved, so he was assigned the job of Director of Novices in Paris to succeed Brother Jean-Henri, who died in 1699. This early assignment, after only a few months of novitiate himself and at most at the age of nineteen, is unusual to say the least, but De La Salle was living in the novitiate at the time, so Dominique was probably more of an assistant to De La Salle, even if, in fact, he had the title of Director.

Nevertheless, this assignment was not really what a doctor might have ordered, for Dominique’s health began to decline. So he was sent to help out in the opening of the school in Darnétal early in 1705. Blain says that the idea was to distract Dominique with all the details of beginning a new school, but again this failed to interrupt Dominique’s concentration on God and the deterioration of his health.

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218. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 42.

It was decided that the fresh air of Saint Yon would be good for him, so he was assigned as Sub-Director to assist Brother Barthélemy in the novitiate, which had been moved there in July of 1705. It could be that by this time people in charge began to realize that Dominique had tuberculosis, from which Blain says he eventually died.

The biographer, ever attentive to the dramatic, calls on the reader to imagine the surprise when Dominique finds his father and two brothers in the novitiate and their astonishment at finding him, the youngest, in charge of them as their Sub-Director.

Blain goes on to tell how Dominique showed no partiality in handing out reprimands and punishment for every least infraction of the Rule by his father, following the standard practice for all novices.

There is even the detail that his elderly father, concerned about keeping his head warm, asked the barber to go easy on cutting his hair. Dominique noticed and ordered the barber to cut his father's hair closer still, which the old man "accepted with a submission and docile heart that impressed all who were there."

Dominique died on 15 June 1707, "with the death that a seraph would desire if seraphim were subject to death." Lucard says he was only twenty-three,<sup>219</sup> but that would put his birth in 1684 and his age in 1699 at fifteen, too young even in those days to be Director of Novices in the *Grande Maison*. It is more reasonable to put Brother Dominique's birth around 1681 and his age at death as twenty-six.

Blain tells the story of Dominique's father, Brother Hilarion, in his life of Dominique. After Hilarion completed the novitiate, he became the doorkeeper at Saint Yon, an assignment he kept until 1713. Blain tells a story about himself to illustrate the great modesty of eyes practiced by the doorkeeper. Over the years, Blain came to Saint Yon quite often as the ecclesiastical superior appointed by the bishop of Rouen. Blain says that Hilarion kept such control of his eyes that he never got to recognize him.

One day, when Blain was in the garden, Hilarion came up to him and requested that he leave, because De La Salle had arranged that no one be there at that hour which was reserved for the President of the Parliament, M. Pontcarré. Blain explained that M. Pontcarré would have no objection to his presence and asked Hilarion to look at him so that he would recognize who he was. When Hilarion did look up, he said he still did not know who he was.<sup>220</sup> Blain himself may not

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219. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 126.

220. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 3, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 315; Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 108.

have known Hilarion that well either, for in his account of the incident he says that Hilarion came to the Institute after many years in the army, whereas it seems he was actually a farmer, though it is possible that Hilarion was both a farmer and a drafted soldier.

Apparently Hilarion served as both doorkeeper and cook, for in 1713, while De La Salle was in the south of France, the community of Guise was in need of a cook, so Barthélemy assigned Hilarion to go to Guise. There being no money to provide any kind of transportation, this elderly Brother had to make the journey on foot. Since there was no feasible direct route from Rouen to Guise at the time, Hilarion had to go first to Paris, about eighty miles, then from Paris to Guise, about another one hundred and twenty miles. It was during Lent, and he most likely felt obliged to take the journey fasting. Also, in that season of the year the roads were in very poor condition from snow and rain. Hilarion made the jaunt from Rouen to Paris in fairly good shape. There he rested for a day before starting out for Guise.

That was his last heroic act of obedience. He was not able to complete the last part of the journey but had to stop in the town of Crecy, about fifteen miles from Guise. There he died. When De La Salle heard of this, he reprimanded Barthélemy for having sent such an elderly man on such a long journey on foot in such a bad season of the year. Some twenty years earlier, in 1691 at the retreat in Vaugirard, a similar situation had occurred, though not fatal, and De La Salle made it clear that some kind of transportation should be used under such circumstances. That was, however, more than ten years before Barthélemy entered. Poor Barthélemy could offer no excuse for what he had done, and it was a costly lesson in prudence for the future Superior.

The lives of the other Sceilliers, Pacôme and Gervais, were much less dramatic than those of their father and their young brother. Pacôme lived as a Brother for only twelve years, dying in January 1717 at the age of forty-two. There is no record of any assignment, except a document found in the Generalate Archives in Rome which indicates that in 1708 he was the manager (*économé*) in charge of kitchen supplies at Saint Yon.<sup>221</sup>

Gervais is listed as one of the gardeners at Saint Yon in the document of 3 June 1718 which has the names and duties of the fourteen Brothers in the community when the property was purchased from the heirs of Madame de Louvois.<sup>222</sup> There is documentary evidence

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221. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 437, note 104.

222. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 417.

that he was in Reims in 1717, when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there on 28 February.<sup>223</sup> Gervais died in Reims on 17 January 1741 at the age of sixty-two.

To return now to Brother Théodore—he was the first of the Sceilliers to join the Institute. He made his formula of vows “for all my life” on 7 June 1705,<sup>224</sup> the same year his father and other two brothers entered the novitiate at Saint Yon. Théodore’s vow formula omits the vow of association, the only such formula of the early vows which has been preserved.<sup>225</sup> This omission was the practice for serving Brothers, so probably it was true for all the Sceilliers except Dominique, who in fact did very little teaching.<sup>226</sup>

There is a record that Théodore was in the Saint Yon community when Barthélemy visited there on 7 May 1717<sup>227</sup> and also that Théodore was the procurator for the community of Reims the following September, when he signed legal documents with Joseph Le Roux, Director of the community and Visitor for the north of France.<sup>228</sup>

Théodore may have stayed in Reims for the rest of his life, for that is where he died in 1755 at the age of seventy-four. There is no other available record of his assignments. He was the first of his family to enter the Institute and must have somehow inspired his three brothers and his father with the Brother’s vocation. And he survived them all, a family of five men who all persevered in the Institute, probably something quite unique in the history of the Brothers, at least at the origins of the Institute.

## Brother Barnabé

Brother Barnabé (Jean Jannin) was born in the town of Romagne, in the diocese of Reims, on 30 November 1683 and entered the Institute in July 1700.<sup>229</sup> The same document states that he made vows for all his life but gives no date.

Félix-Paul offers a rather complete history of the life of Brother Barnabé in his critical edition of the letters of the Founder.<sup>230</sup> Barnabé

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223. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

224. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 18.

225. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 190, note 1.

226. Cf. Cahiers lasalliens 25, pp. 59, 143.

227. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 187.

228. Cahiers lasalliens 37/1, pp. 140ff.

229. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 35.

was sent to Dijon to help Brother Antoine Partois open the Brothers' school in 1705. There with Antoine he received an attestation of his good life and morals from the pastor of Saint Philibert on behalf of the bishop of the diocese, which was necessary in order to receive approval as teachers from the city council. According to Félix-Paul, his name appears on the interdiction in the writing masters' suit against the Brothers of Paris in March 1706, though he is not on the list of the Brothers in the same suit in June 1704. He was in Dijon in January 1707, for in that month he received another certificate of approval from the bishop of the diocese.

Barnabé's next assignment may have been to Mâcon, for he is one of two Brothers named in the town council documents of that city in 1711.<sup>231</sup> The other was Brother Simon, whose story will be told later. The two Brothers were probably sent there in 1710 to help open the school in that city. De La Salle mentions the presence of the Brothers there in his letter of 14 February 1710 to Gabriel Drolin.<sup>232</sup>

The school was initiated by Canon Georges of Mâcon at his own expense, apparently without the concurrence of the bishop or of the authorities of the town. Blain says that the bishop of Mâcon was not well disposed toward the Brothers but that he does not know why.<sup>233</sup> Perhaps the bishop was not friendly with Canon Georges, or perhaps he had to agree with the town authorities, who did not appreciate the Brothers being dressed like religious; they apparently wanted priests or laymen to do the teaching. In any case, the Brothers were told to leave town, which they did around Christmas in 1711.<sup>234</sup>

Barnabé was back in Dijon, as Director, when Barthélemy visited that city in 1717, but he was unable to attend the General Chapter of 1717. He was the first Director of the school in Auxonne in 1723 and made vows according to the Bull of Approbation on 22 September 1727 at Saint Yon. He was also present for the transfer of the body of De La Salle from Saint Sever to Saint Yon in 1734 and for the Chapter which followed. He died in Auxonne on 18 September 1740.

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230. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 265–266, 374.

231. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, p. 249.

232. *Letters*, 27.14.

233. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 41.

234. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, pp. 248ff; Calcutt, *De La Salle, A City Saint*, p. 512.

## Brother Norbert

Brother Norbert (André Desbouves) was born in Aisne, in the diocese of Soissons, on 6 December 1676 and entered the Institute in 1700.<sup>235</sup> He was probably in one of the Paris schools in 1704, though his name on the list of the Brothers indicted in the writing masters' suit is in some question; it could be Robert, not Norbert.<sup>236</sup>

He was in Chartres in 1705, for he signed the death certificates of three of the Brothers who died there during the purple fever epidemic,<sup>237</sup> though he was not the Director. At that time Brother Athanase was Director, and he signed the death certificates of the other two who died in the same tragic situation.<sup>238</sup>

Norbert was definitely in Chartres in 1710 as Sub-Director to Brother Hubert.<sup>239</sup> It seems from De La Salle's letter to Hubert in that year that Norbert was somewhat of a problem in community because of his lack of docility. The Founder reminds Hubert that it is his responsibility to supervise Norbert during recreation, to prevent Norbert from speaking against the rules (perhaps the rules regarding the conduct of the school), to see that Norbert does his duty, and not to allow him to do as he pleases.<sup>240</sup>

Norbert may have had a problem with authority, but he was the Director of Calais in 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there on 16 to 18 March, and he signed the names of the other five Brothers with him in the community on the document of agreement for a General Assembly.<sup>241</sup> In all the other communities, the document regarding Barthélemy's visits was signed by each individual Brother. Perhaps Norbert was an authoritarian Director, just as he was anti-authority as a Brother in community. As Director of Calais, he was one of the sixteen Directors who participated in the Chapter of 1717.<sup>242</sup>

When M. Pierre Caron, dean of the diocese in Calais and canon of the cathedral there, circulated the false notion that De La Salle was an appellant against the pope's decision regarding Jansenism (confusing the Founder with his brother, Louis de La Salle), De La Salle wrote

235. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 35.

236. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 375.

237. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 298.

238. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

239. *Ibid.*, p. 215.

240. *Letters*, 12.14, 18, 22, 28.

241. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

242. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, pp. 408–409.

a letter to Norbert on 28 January 1719, making it clear that he was irrevocably united with the pope and with the decisions of the Holy See.<sup>243</sup>

There is the possibility that the letter was written as much for Norbert's benefit as for any public purpose, because there is some suspicion that Norbert had been taken in by the ideas of the bishop of the diocese of Boulogne, Pierre de Langle, who was a strong leader among the appellants.<sup>244</sup> Calais was part of his diocese.

Félix-Paul suggests that De La Salle had Norbert called back to Rouen to be under his closer supervision. In any case, Norbert was at Saint Yon in April when the Founder died, and he signed the certificate of burial.<sup>245</sup> Evidently, once De La Salle was no longer present, Brother Norbert created a problem, for the *Catalogue* indicates that he was dismissed from the Institute in 1720.<sup>246</sup> Rigault says that the reason for his dismissal is not known.<sup>247</sup> Félix-Paul surmises, and Gallego is inclined to agree with him, that theological quarreling may have been the reason.<sup>248</sup> Norbert may have never lost his tendency to resist authority.

Both Félix-Paul and Gallego make allusion to an account in the fourth book of Blain's biography of De La Salle which tells about the only Brother who succumbed to the Jansenist doctrines in the forty years that De La Salle lived with the Brothers.<sup>249</sup> The Brother, whose name is not given by Blain, after leaving the Institute, made a voyage to Marseille and lost his life when the ship went down. The possibility is that the Brother in this account is Norbert. As Blain put it, he lost his life as he shipwrecked his faith, but there is the hope that he repented and died a good death.

In the history of the origins of the Institute, Norbert is one Brother, among many others, who did a lot of good work for many years but yet did not persevere. He had entered at the age of twenty-four, and he served in responsible positions for twenty years. He did his share in the founding of the Institute.

243. *Letters*, 132; Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 210, note 2.

244. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

245. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 299, note 5.

246. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 35.

247. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 28.

248. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 298; Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 579.

249. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 1, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 227–228.

## Brother Clément

Brother Clément (Jacques Gatelet) was born in the town of Romagne, in the diocese of Reims, on 28 September 1684 and entered the Institute on 20 June 1700.<sup>250</sup> His first known assignment was in Laon.

A confidential letter which De La Salle wrote to him on 26 June 1706 tells a good deal about this Brother at the age of twenty-two:

I am greatly consoled, my very dear Brother, that your rheumatism is cured. Take care, I beg you, to be very prudent and also to conform yourself in all things to God's will, with a submission that is not only external but from the heart too.

Take care not to slap your students; you know that is forbidden by the rules.

I am very glad that you have a good confessor and that he gives you such good advice. Try to take advantage of this as long as you have him.

If you wish to become interior, it is a matter of great importance for you to control your mind and your eyes. Without this kind of mortification, it is almost impossible to make much progress in virtue.

Make sure that you are indifferent as to what you are ordered under obedience. This is one of the things which most of all will draw upon you the grace of God.

It is a good practice to read the rules often, in order to be quite faithful to them. As you know, it will be their observance that will ensure your sanctification.

Having God in view in all your spiritual exercises will contribute most to your making them well. God not only requires the outward appearance of your actions; he wishes them to be carried out with interior dispositions.

Take only one defect at a time in your daily examination of conscience, and keep at it for several days consecutively.

If you know what I should do to save the Brothers' schools from ruin, please let me know, for we must take the means to keep them going.

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250. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 35.

I think we must dismiss the students who are not regular in their attendance or who come late, for to tolerate either the one or the other brings about disorder in the school.

During the holidays we shall see what can be done regarding a Director for you. In matters of conscience do the best you can until then.

You don't have to conform to the other Brothers in matters of food unless you feel completely well.

I am, my very dear Brother,

Devotedly yours in Our Lord.

De La Salle<sup>251</sup>

This letter, as Félix-Paul points out,<sup>252</sup> reveals that Clément is probably in charge of a second school in Laon, opened in 1698, that is served from the one community, for De La Salle is giving Clément a number of administrative directives he ordinarily did not give to the Brothers who were not in administration.

Some of Clément's personality is seen in the advice that De La Salle was giving him. His health is not all that good; he has to have special food, yet he is serious about his life as a Brother, especially in his request for a Director to guide his conscience and also in other comments about mortification, keeping the rules, and examination of conscience.

Other information available about Clément includes his signature on the document of Brother Barthélemy's visit to the community of Reims on 28 February 1717,<sup>253</sup> his presence at the opening of the school in Saint-Omer on 16 October 1720<sup>254</sup> and at the General Chapter of 1725 as Sub-Director of Saint-Omer,<sup>255</sup> and the fact that he made vows according to the Bull of Approbation in August of that year. He was also at the Chapter of 1745 as Director of Meaux.<sup>256</sup> He died in Reims in October 1753 at the age of sixty-nine,<sup>257</sup> an advanced age in those days, especially for one whose health was not all that good at the age of twenty-two.

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251. *Letters*, 50.

252. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 32.

253. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

254. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 15.

255. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

256. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 30.

257. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 35.

## Brother Hubert

Brother Hubert (Gilles Gérard) was born on 7 December 1683 in the town of Romagne, in the diocese of Reims, and entered the Institute on 20 April 1700, the same date and from the same town as Brother Clément, whose story has just been told. Hubert made vows for all his life, but the date is not given.<sup>258</sup> At least six letters written by De La Salle to Hubert were preserved by Hubert.

The first of these letters to Hubert is dated 5 May 1702. Hubert was nineteen years old and in his first year of community life after his novitiate. It is not clear which community this was. De La Salle's principal message to Hubert in this letter is about the importance of obedience:

My very dear Brother, you must allow yourself to be led as a child of obedience who has no other aim than to obey and in doing so carry out God's will.

Take great care never to use such terms as "I want" or "I won't" or "I must." These are expressions and ways of speaking that are to be held in abhorrence. They cannot but keep back the graces that God offers to those who have no other will but his, for as Saint Bernard says, it is self-will alone that leads to hell.

When you have worries, make them known to your Director, and you will find that God will bless you and either give you the grace to bear them for his love or relieve you of them.

Be on your guard against allowing yourself to act according to your whims, for God detests such actions.

The principal virtue you must strive for is obedience.<sup>259</sup>

Aside from the fact that Hubert is only nineteen years old and in need of the training of obedience, this emphasis on obedience is typical of the spirituality of the religious life, not just in seventeenth-century France but up until quite modern times.

The next letter, four years later, is dated 1 June 1706, at which time Hubert is Director of the community in Laon, whose members were responsible for the two schools in that city. He was just twenty-three years old, and Brother Clément, his companion in the novitiate, was the only one in the community who was younger than himself.

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258. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

259. *Letters*, 7.2–6.

Brother Robert, age thirty, was another member; his story will follow Hubert's. These three Brothers—Hubert, Clément, and Robert—persevered in their vocation.

The other three, from existing evidence, did not: another Brother Cassien entered the Institute in 1713; Isidore and Étienne left the Institute before the *Catalogue des Frères* was written in 1714. What little is known about these two is inserted here.

Brother Isidore (Théodore Lambert) made vows for all his life on 7 June 1705.<sup>260</sup> Judging from references in the letter to Hubert, Isidore seems to have been both a serving Brother and one who also did some teaching. He was evidently in Paris in 1706, for his name is on the list of the Brothers who were forbidden to teach in the parish of Saint Sulpice as a result of the lawsuit by the writing masters. He was back in the community of Laon in 1707 but transferred to Guise in 1708, then to Rethel from 1708 to 1711—quite a series of rapid changes!

The next and last reference to him is in a letter of 17 July 1714, written by Brother Barthélemy to the pastor of the parish in Mende where the Brothers were teaching. Isidore had been a member of that community but had left it and had come to Paris, telling Barthélemy that the Director, Brother Henri, was treating the Brothers poorly and was planning to get married and that the community was neglecting its religious duties.<sup>261</sup> There is confusion over this account by Isidore which Barthélemy gives in his letter. It is possible that Barthélemy did not have time to make his own investigation. Gallego thinks that much of what Isidore says is intended to justify his leaving the Institute.<sup>262</sup> More will be told about this event in the story of Brother Henri. In any case, it seems clear that Isidore did not persevere with the Brothers, for his name is not in the *Catalogue*.

Étienne was a rather bizarre character whose story is told in a manuscript of the eighteenth century which was intended to provide historical facts not found in Blain. Étienne's family name was Le Loutre. There is no evidence of the date of his birth or the date of his entry into the Institute. The manuscript says that he was sent back to the novitiate around 1708 to correct the loss of his religious spirit. He found this second novitiate too restrictive; he asked to be released and to make vows for all his life; otherwise he would quit the Institute. De La Salle is said to have reasoned with him a hundred times but without success. Finally, the Founder, out of consideration for his

260. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 19.

261. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, pp. 313–315.

262. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 492.

other good qualities, allowed him to make the vows he wanted. But he did not persevere, and the manuscript says that the loss of his vocation was the result of his obstinacy. Étienne must have left his community sometime before 17 July 1712, because someone else (Jean Pérotin) entered the Institute on that date and took the name of Brother Étienne.<sup>263</sup> The manuscript story of the original Étienne says that when he left, he went to Paris, his native town, where he led a wandering life. If the manuscript is true, this was the Étienne who was in Hubert's community on 1 June 1706.<sup>264</sup>

Perhaps the story of these two Brothers, Isidore and Étienne, throws some light on one line of De La Salle's letter to Hubert: "I am told that the classes of Brother Étienne and Brother Isidore are falling completely into disorder. Please take steps to remedy this."<sup>265</sup>

The other four letters to Hubert are all rather longer than most of the others in the complete collection of the letters written by the Founder. They are filled with specific advice in response to a wide range of comments and questions in the letters that De La Salle received from Hubert. It can be deduced from this that in his letters Hubert was giving detailed reports about himself and his performance as the Director of the community, and that being a Director in a community at that time was not an easy job.

One example of the challenges given to Hubert is the person of Brother Quentin, the second Brother to have that name. De La Salle, in a letter dated 2 October 1710, has much advice to give Hubert about Quentin. He says that Quentin is a complainer, if Hubert wants to listen to him; he adds that Hubert cannot expect Quentin to get along with Norbert and that he should not tolerate any of Quentin's negligence of duty, nor allow him to learn writing, but keep him with the first class [of readers]; also, Hubert may allow Quentin to make his first vows, if he desires this, but Hubert should give some thought to testing him a bit more.

Félix-Paul adds that it is probable that Quentin's stay in Chartres was brief, as also his remaining a Brother. There is no other record of this second Brother Quentin presently available.<sup>266</sup>

Hubert was fundamentally an honest, conscientious, and docile person. Seemingly, he took quite seriously the advice of the Founder about obedience which was in the first letter he received and which

263. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 194.

264. *Letters*, 8.29.

265. *Ibid.*

266. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 209–216.

he preserved the rest of his life. De La Salle's long letters to him are answers to confessions and questions that Hubert had written to him. Some of the information about the community, of course, could come from the letters of the other Brothers.

Lucard tells of an incident about Hubert that took place while Hubert was Director in Chartres, after the death of the great benefactor of the community, Bishop Godet des Marais, and probably during the famine of 1709:

The community was in a state of complete destitution. Brother Hubert, the Director, went to see De La Salle and told him of their miserable condition. "Do you believe in the Gospel?" the holy Founder asked him. "I will give my life," replied the Brother, "to prove my faith in this revealed word." "Very well," added the man of God, "does it not say in the Gospel, 'Do not worry about tomorrow. Seek the kingdom of God, and the rest will be given you besides?'"

Brother Hubert knew from experience that similar words on the holy lips of his Superior were a sign of approaching help from Providence. He went back to Chartres full of confidence. He said that since that time there was never anything lacking. Charitable persons were moved, without being asked, to provide for the needs of the community.<sup>267</sup>

Hubert was a man of faith. It was this faith that gave him the loyalty he had for the rules of the Institute. It was another way of understanding obedience. This kind of obedience was probably one of the first characteristics that De La Salle looked for in the Brothers whom he appointed as Directors. The Founder put stress on strict adherence to the rules and regulations that had been agreed upon, and he saw the Directors as the ones to see that all these directives were observed.

The facts are that from being Director in Laon in 1706, Hubert became Director of the community in Guise in 1708; then in 1709, partly at his own request, he was transferred from Guise and sent to Chartres, again as Director. He was still there in 1716, as Director, when Barthélemy made his visit as he began his round of the communities in preparation for the General Assembly in 1717. It is probable that Hubert had been there since 1709. In 1717 he was one of the sixteen Directors who attended the General Chapter at which Brother Barthélemy was elected Superior.

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267. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 23.

Hubert also attended the General Chapter of 1720 for the election of Brother Timothée to succeed Barthélemy, and he was again present at the Chapter of 1725 for the reception of the Bull of Approbation, renewing his vows according to the Bull in August of that year. At that time he was the Director of the community in Paris. In 1734, as Director of the community in Meaux, he was present for the transfer of the remains of the Founder from Saint Sever to Saint Yon in Rouen and also participated in the Chapter of that year.

He was at the Chapter of 1745 as Director of the community of Noyon, which he had opened in 1739. In 1751 he participated in a sixth Chapter, which elected Brother Claude as the third Superior, to replace Brother Timothée, who had resigned for reasons of poor health. The minutes of that Chapter state, "Brother Hubert, former Director of Angers, was unable to sign because he has lost his sight."<sup>268</sup>

Hubert died in Maréville on 29 June 1759 at the age of seventy-six.<sup>269</sup> He had been a Brother for fifty-nine years and Director of at least seven communities over a period of fifty years. Certainly he was one of the strong pillars of the founding of the Institute during and long after the life of De La Salle.

## Brother Robert

Brother Robert (Denis Maubert) was born on 2 January 1673<sup>270</sup> or 1676<sup>271</sup> in the town of Compainville, which is in the diocese of Rouen, and entered the Institute on 15 May 1700; he took vows for all his life, but no date is given.<sup>272</sup>

The first documentary evidence of his work, which is the list of the Brothers indicted in the writing masters' lawsuit of June 1704, indicates that he was teaching in Paris at that time.<sup>273</sup> In 1705 he was probably the one sent with Brother Ponce to open the school in Darnétal, but he may have been back in Paris in 1706, for he was on the list in the lawsuit again. He was in Darnétal in October 1707 with Brother Denis, and when Denis became sick in 1708, Robert was in charge of the school with the assistance of a young Brother.

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268. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 184.

269. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 35.

270. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

271. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 159.

272. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 36.

273. Cahiers lasalliens 40/2, p. 71.

De La Salle wrote to Robert in March 1709, encouraging him to make vows for three years on the feast of the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>274</sup> Robert was still in Darnétal, with Brother Bruno as his Director, when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there on 2 April 1717.<sup>275</sup> Robert was one of the Brothers who signed the burial certificate of the Founder on 8 April 1719.<sup>276</sup>

Ten years later, in 1729, he was authorized to make vows according to the Bull for all his life as a serving Brother. This was unusual, for ordinarily it would be a serving Brother who would be allowed to make vows as a teaching Brother. It could be that Robert made this choice to have a respite from as many as twenty-five years of teaching, which had not been all that easy for him. It could also be that he was making vows for all his life for the first time, after more than twenty-five years of temporary vows or of no vows at all.

Some Brothers made only temporary vows all their lives, and some apparently never made vows. This seems clear from the early community practice of prayers for the dead. Separate prescriptions were made for Brothers with perpetual vows, for Brothers with only temporary vows, and for Brothers with no vows at all.<sup>277</sup> It is possible that those with vows deserved more suffrages because of their greater merit or their greater liability in the practice of vows.

There was no mention of vows in the Rule of 1705, which was typical of other religious communities,<sup>278</sup> although the Brothers made vows from the beginning: association to keep schools for the poor, stability in the Institute, and obedience. What really held the Brothers together was not their vows so much as their inner commitment to one another and to the work of the schools, their common garb, and the practices of their community life. There were no vows of poverty or chastity for the Brothers until they were mandated by the Church in 1725 with the Bull of Approbation. There were, however, chapters on these two virtues in the first Rule, of which the earliest extant copy is dated 1705.

Robert kept many of the monthly letters he had received from De La Salle. Ten of them are in the critical edition, six of them clearly addressed to him, the other four probably directed to him.<sup>279</sup> In them Robert comes through as a rough-and-ready person, better suited for

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274. *Letters*, 43.19.

275. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 186.

276. *Cahiers lasalliens* 26, pp. 315–316.

277. *Cahiers lasalliens* 25, p. 86.

278. *Cahiers lasalliens* 11, pp. 71, 77.

279. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 266–292.

work in class than as the leader of a community, maybe even better as a serving Brother than in the classroom. He seems to have been short tempered and impulsive. He embarrassed Denis when they walked together in Darnétal or Rouen, though it is not clear how he did that. He had a problem of slapping the pupils. The Founder asked Denis to see to it that Robert stopped doing this in Darnétal, and De La Salle wrote to Robert himself about this in earlier and later letters.

The Founder also told him not to run after the pupils and not to shout at their mothers. He urged Robert to live peaceably with the Brother he was living with, avoid outbursts of anger, and refrain from yelling out the window. In one of the letters, the Founder says, "Out of love for God, put up with the trouble that people give you outside the community."<sup>280</sup>

Robert must have been a diamond in the rough. Like Mathias, however, Robert's love for De La Salle led him to keep the letters he received from the Founder, though they were not all that complimentary. And he persevered until death, which came to him in the community of Meaux in 1734 at the age of fifty-eight or sixty-one, depending on which date of birth is correct.

## Brother Alphonse

Brother Alphonse (Pierre Marie) was born in Saint-Chéron-lez-Chartres, in the diocese of Chartres, on 5 November 1677 and entered the Institute on 27 June 1700.<sup>281</sup> There is no mention of vows in the *Catalogue*; he may be one who never did take vows.

In 1708 he was undoubtedly a serving Brother in Guise; Brother Hubert was his Director. De La Salle wrote to Hubert in January of that year, "True, Brother Alphonse can be difficult at times, but you must try to get him to be more amenable," and later in the same letter, "You go to the kitchen and spend time talking with Brother Alphonse. This gives rise to familiarity and to his lack of respect for you."<sup>282</sup>

Here again is an example of the spirituality of the time: an emphasis not only on silence itself but also on a kind of social ranking of the Director over the other Brothers in the community which was preserved by maintaining some sort of distance, at least by silence, between the Director and the members of his community.

280. *Letters*, 44.9.

281. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 36.

282. *Letters*, 9.3, 12.

Brother Alphonse was in Rethel on 23 February 1717 when Brother Barthélemy visited there on his rounds of all the communities of France.<sup>283</sup> He died in Rethel on 13 December 1727 at the age of fifty. He is one of those Brothers who did humble work for more than twenty-five years with little or no record in history but still an important part of the founding of the Institute.

## Brother Henri (2nd)

Brother Henri (Joachim Pelard) was born in Guise, in the diocese of Laon, on 3 October 1683 and entered the Institute on 28 November 1700.<sup>284</sup> He is probably the one who, according to Blain, was the son of a poor shoemaker in Picardy, for Guise is in that area of France.<sup>285</sup> If what Blain says is true, Henri came into the Institute without knowing how to write, was received out of charity by De La Salle, and was given the training he needed to become a teacher.

The first record of any assignment indicates that he was one of the five Brothers staffing the hospice and the schools of Rouen on 24 November 1705.<sup>286</sup> Next, he and Brother Sébastien were assigned to open the Brothers' school in Grenoble in October 1708.<sup>287</sup>

In May or June of 1713,<sup>288</sup> when the Founder came to Mende from his retreat in the monastery of Saint Maximin, Henri was one of the Brothers in that community. Blain's account tells that De La Salle was rudely refused lodging and that he had to take shelter elsewhere, first with the Capuchins and then with a pious woman of the city, Madame Saint Denis. Biographers have struggled to understand exactly what happened on that occasion, except Maillefer, who makes no mention at all of the Founder's going to Mende from his retreat at Saint Maximin but has him traveling directly to Grenoble via Marseille.<sup>289</sup> What actually happened will probably never be known for certainty.

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283. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

284. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 36.

285. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 6, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 48.

286. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 265.

287. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 184, note 14.

288. Cf. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 490.

289. Maillefer, Cahiers lasalliens 6, pp. 213–215; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 157.

After reviewing all the evidence at hand and studying the positions of the other biographers, Gallego has developed his own scenario, which will be adopted for this account.<sup>290</sup>

Gallego does not accept the story as told by Blain.<sup>291</sup> He feels that Blain typically exaggerates the humiliation of De La Salle in order to highlight the virtue of the Founder. Blain may have been influenced by the account that Barthélemy gives of Isidore's report about conditions in Mende, which has been related in the story of Isidore's life. In Gallego's view, that account is motivated by Isidore's need to justify his own conduct, especially his leaving the Institute.<sup>292</sup>

Gallego says that Brother Bernardin visited De La Salle when the Founder was at the monastery of Saint Maximin. He holds this position because of the details about De La Salle at Saint Maximin which Bernardin gave in written testimony of 6 May 1742.<sup>293</sup> In this document Bernardin states that the Founder did not have a change of clothes during the forty days of his retreat and that he left there to go to Marseille on his way to Mende with only seven livres and ten sous (about seventy dollars), which would leave him very little money for food.<sup>294</sup>

Gallego believes that a year earlier, in 1712, when De La Salle traveled from Avignon to Marseille, Bernardin came with the Founder, in order to go with him to Rome or to replace one of the Brothers from Marseille who would go to Rome to help Gabriel Drolin.<sup>295</sup>

When Bernardin visited De La Salle at the monastery of Saint Maximin, probably in the spring of 1713, he brought news of the developments in Marseille: possibly the departure from the Institute of Brother Ponce and other Brothers and the death of Brother Médard in February 1713.<sup>296</sup>

Brother Médard had been sent to Mende in December 1712, in order that Brother Timothée, the Director there, could come to Marseille as Director of Novices.<sup>297</sup> Médard seems to have been an unstable person, about whom there is no record in *Livret des Premiers Vœux* or in the *Catalogue*. Lucard says that Médard had been in the

290. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 477.

291. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 6, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 47–49.

292. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 492, note 108.

293. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 76.

294. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 489.

295. *Ibid.*, p. 480, note 42.

296. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 378; Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, pp. 489–490.

297. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 181.

communities of Calais and Grenoble and had left the Institute, probably from Grenoble.<sup>298</sup> He returned to De La Salle in Marseille for re-admission, and the Founder accepted him. He was not long in Mende before the cold weather became too much for him, and he left without authorization, intending to go to Avignon. On the way, he suffered pleurisy and stopped in the community in Alès, where he died within seven days.<sup>299</sup>

De La Salle sent Bernardin to Mende to replace Médard and to be the Director.<sup>300</sup> With him were Henri and Nicolas, one of two Brothers (the other is Macaire) whose names are on the documents of Brother Barthélemy's visits to the communities in 1716 and 1717 but not in the *Catalogue*. All we know about Nicolas is what Blain tells in his story about Mende.

There were, then, three Brothers in Mende when De La Salle made his visit there. Bernardin certainly did not tum the Founder away. Because there were only three beds in the house, De La Salle went to the Capuchins for lodging but visited the community of the Brothers during the day for prayers and perhaps meals.<sup>301</sup>

Henri was possibly angry with the Founder for two reasons, and he probably received him coldly. First, he may have hoped to be the Director after Timothée, but apparently no one was named to that position when Timothée was brought to Marseille, and Henri, as the one longest in the Institute, had assumed the position until Bernardin came.<sup>302</sup> Second, Henri may have been upset because there was quite a period, after Médard left and before Bernardin arrived, when he and Nicolas had to do the work of three Brothers in the school.

Nicolas, the third Brother at Mende, also may have gotten into the act, according to Gallego, by making some more or less playful remarks to the effect that it would help if De La Salle would contribute to the purchase of the food they were eating.<sup>303</sup>

The fact is that De La Salle assigned Henri to be Director of the community in Les Vans that same year,<sup>304</sup> his signature as Director is on a receipt dated 21 August 1713. This does not seem consistent with the rude behavior of Henri reported by Blain. Also, the Founder or Timothée—whom De La Salle put in charge of the communities in the

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298. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 284.

299. *Ibid.*, p. 295.

300. *Ibid.*, p. 295; Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 490.

301. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 491.

302. *Ibid.*, note 105.

303. *Ibid.*, p. 491.

304. *Ibid.*, p. 493.

south—assigned Henri to be Director of Mende later in 1713 or early in 1714, when Bernardin was assigned as Director of Alès.

When Isidore, who had joined Henri at Mende, quit there and went to Paris in 1714, Henri was left alone in Mende until 1716. In that year, Nicolas was sent to be with him. The two of them were there when Barthélemy made his visit at Christmastime 1716. They signed their agreement to the General Assembly on 27 December, but Henri added a clause—with which Nicolas agreed—to the effect that the Brothers in the south should be given adequate representation at the Assembly.<sup>305</sup> Evidently Henri was not slow to assert himself in such matters.

Henri and Nicolas died during the plague of 1721, which had spread north from Marseille to Mende. They were faithful to the end in their service to the city of Mende. On 21 September the city council had given Henri the responsibility, with a priest, to distribute help to the sick. He died from the plague on 14 October; Nicolas had died two weeks earlier.<sup>306</sup> For both it was a heroic end to their lives as Brothers, an especially good one for Henri, who thereby redeemed any reputation he may have earned for days of conflict with the Founder.

## Brother Albert

Brother Albert was an extremely competent Brother who, according to most writers, did not persevere in the Institute. Gallego, however, charitably holds out the possibility that he may have died around the year 1711, which would explain why his name is not on the list of the *Catalogue* of the Brothers drawn up around the year 1714.<sup>307</sup> One argument against this suggestion is the fact that De La Salle did not mention Albert's death in any of the letters he sent to Gabriel afterward, though he did mention the deaths of other Brothers in an earlier letter to Rome.

Almost the only things known for sure about this Brother are learned from De La Salle's letters to Gabriel. He is mentioned six times in five of these letters<sup>308</sup> and alluded to in two others.<sup>309</sup> It seems

305. *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*, pp. 109–110.

306. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 385.

307. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 483, note 66.

308. *Letters*, 16.2, 19.18, 20, 23.6, 26.10.

309. *Ibid.*, 17.15 and 24.12.

clear that Gabriel knew Albert, which means that Albert was a Brother before 1702. Another conjecture, based on the skill he possessed as a capable leader, is that he had more than the ordinary degree of education that was typical of the Brothers; he could have been one of those described by Blain<sup>310</sup> who gave up a university career to join De La Salle as early as 1684. It is even suggested that he knew Latin.<sup>311</sup>

Albert is also mentioned in letters to Brother Joseph and to Brother Mathias which will be described later. There is no record of Albert's family name, when he entered the Institute, or what vows he took. It is clear that he had good administrative skills and that De La Salle appreciated his ability to start off a school efficiently. It seems probable, from the assignments that De La Salle gave him as early as 1705, that Albert entered the Institute around the year 1700, though his name is not in *Livret des Premiers Vœux* among those who took vows for all their lives in 1705.

In one letter to Gabriel, written on 27 April 1705, De La Salle mentions that Albert is in charge of the school in Avignon,<sup>312</sup> which he opened;<sup>313</sup> this was a significant assignment, because Avignon was a papal city, territory belonging to the pope, and for that reason a prize in the mind of the Founder. In addition, De La Salle found it convenient to send his books to Avignon for Church approval to print, and he wanted to send and receive his letters through Avignon, in order to get the benefit of lower papal postal costs; Albert was entrusted with handling the transfer of the books and with forwarding the letters.<sup>314</sup>

In his letter of 27 April 1705, De La Salle says that he wanted to send Albert to Rome but that Gabriel had indicated in an earlier letter that he did not want him.<sup>315</sup> It is interesting that the Founder again says in a later letter (4 September 1705) that he could send Albert to help Gabriel, if he needs him. He adds:

We are going to open a school in Marseille, and after Brother Albert has been there until Easter, I will be able to send him to you to give a little help in your endeavors, if they are not going well. He is really good at that. In the first six months he would work wonders.<sup>316</sup>

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310. Blain, vol. 2, book 2, chap. 1, Cahiers lasalliens 7, p. 224.

311. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 129.

312. *Letters*, 16.2.

313. *Ibid.*, 17.15.

314. *Ibid.*, 19.18, 20.1.

315. *Ibid.*, 17.15.

316. *Ibid.*, 19.20.

This seems like an unfavorable comparison between what Gabriel has accomplished in three years and what De La Salle would expect Albert to do. Again, in his letter of 21 June 1706, De La Salle says that he is sending a Brother from Avignon to Rome in five or six months, which could be the same Brother Albert.<sup>317</sup>

De La Salle said “in five or six months,” because he was thinking then of sending Albert to set up a school in Valréas, which he could do in that length of time. Albert did accomplish that, but because of a delayed start, he did not begin until April 1707.

Earlier, Albert had been the one to establish the school in Marseille, and he received a formal expression of thanks from the city. It is in this municipal record that we learn the full name of Brother Albert, if that is what it really was. Rigault reports from the record that “Brother Albert-de-l’Enfant-Jésus” was called to the meeting on 6 April 1706 to receive public congratulations. He was asked “to apply himself principally to train the children in reverence for God and to instruct them in all the duties of a Christian. This is what the Brother promised with much modesty and reliance on the help of the Lord.”<sup>318</sup>

It is possible that Albert-de-l’Enfant-Jésus was not the real name of Albert but a title given to him by the authorities in Marseille. Lucard points out that because of their devotion to the Child Jesus, the Brothers were sometimes called the Brothers of the Child Jesus and the Institute was referred to as the Brothers of the Christian Schools of the Child Jesus.<sup>319</sup> One of the early seals of the Institute was an image of Saint Joseph with the Child Jesus.

Albert was sent from the south of France to become the Director of the school in Troyes, possibly around the year 1707 or 1708. De La Salle wrote Brother Mathias on 4 April (assigned to 1708 from internal evidence) in response to Mathias’s request for a transfer from Mende, possibly to go to Troyes or to live with Albert. De La Salle tells Brother Mathias, “Brother Albert is not the type for you.”<sup>320</sup> Félix-Paul suggests that Albert had become accustomed, because of all his work founding schools in Avignon, Marseille, and Valréas, to visit people outside the community, something Mathias may have had in mind, for the Founder had to warn Mathias about it in earlier letters.<sup>321</sup>

The next reference to Albert is in De La Salle’s letter to Brother Joseph, the Visitor of the north, who was confronted with a serious

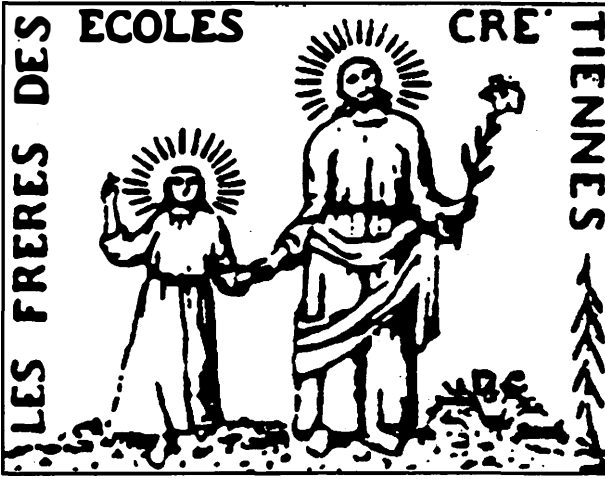
317. *Ibid.*, 24.12.

318. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 352.

319. Lucard, *Annales de l’Institut*, 1, p. 273, note 1.

320. *Letters*, 61.2.

321. *Ibid.*, 57.3, 58.10, 62.5, 64.12.



An example of an early seal of the Institute, with images of Saint Joseph and the Child Jesus. The illustration (enlarged to twice the original size) is of a wax seal on a handwritten assignment sent to Brother Joseph giving him the authority to visit all the communities of the north except Paris. The document, dated 1717 and bearing De La Salle's signature, is preserved in the Generalate Archives in Rome. *Bulletin des Frères des Écoles Chrétienues*, 1994:171, 1954:164, 1957:191.

housing problem in Troyes. De La Salle tells Joseph not to do anything until he could come to Troyes. He also tells Joseph not to mention his coming to anyone, not even Albert. This seems to suggest some lack of confidence in Albert.<sup>322</sup> It may be connected with a report that had been circulated that Albert and the Brother living with him had a quarrel, maybe even an exchange of blows.<sup>323</sup> This may have precipitated Albert's departure from the Institute and been one reason why De La Salle was coming to Troyes, that is, not only to settle the housing problem but also to have a talk with Albert.<sup>324</sup>

If that presumption is true, it is one more sad ending to what was an illustrious career as a Brother, another sorrow in the heart of De La Salle. For Albert was a key person in the development of the Institute, a Brother with a special talent for inaugurating new ventures, evidently gifted with diplomacy, energy, educational know-how, and at ease moving from one assignment to another in De La Salle's service.

322. *Ibid.*, 53.3

323. *Ibid.*, 31.20.

324. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 167.

## Brother Mathias

Mathias is another Brother who is known almost exclusively from the letters of De La Salle. He probably entered the Institute around the year 1700. Though it appears that he left the Institute when he was still quite young, Mathias kept ten letters the Founder had written him, and they were found many years later in the attic of a house in the small town of Pernes near Avignon.

These letters were written to Mathias within a span of a year and a half, from 3 December 1706 to 16 May 1708, while Mathias was first in the Reims community, then in Paris at his request in early 1707, then transferred again at his request to Mende in June 1707. At Mende he asked to be returned to Paris but was sent to Avignon in June 1708; from there he left the Institute sometime before 1710, when another Brother received the name Mathias.

These letters, which were discovered around 1850, form a special group among the fifty-three autograph originals of De La Salle that have been preserved, because they reveal so much about the kindness of the Founder, but they also illustrate one type of Brother who lived and worked with him. There are, of course, no letters written to De La Salle by Mathias (or by any of the other Brothers); we have to discern the character of Mathias from what De La Salle wrote to him, almost all of which was in response to what Mathias had written to the Founder.

The best way to appreciate the personalities of the two correspondents is to read all ten letters in their entirety. For the purpose of this book on the early Brothers, it seems appropriate to cite just two complete letters as fairly typical. The first is dated 3 December 1706:

You are the first one to whom I am writing this month, my very dear Brother.

I want nothing more than to be able to comfort you in your troubles, but you must see that I cannot do so unless I know what they are. I am not at all sure what worries you.

You simply tell me that you are not well. I do not know if this is your only reason for asking to come back to Paris or to be sent elsewhere. Let me know what the cause of it all is.

You tell me hardly anything in your letters. A thing that needs saying only once, you repeat over and over again.

Let me know all your problems. If they come from the fact that I don't write to you, from now on I will write to you every time

that I write to the Brothers. But, please, make sure that your letters are written in a better hand and with better spelling, for I can hardly read them.

In your prayer, continue to occupy yourself with the preparatory acts. You are doing well to apply yourself to become interiorly recollected and to avoid distractions.

The only reason you give me for transferring you is that you do not fit in with the community in Reims. Surely you realize that in our Society we must adapt ourselves to wherever we may be sent by our Superiors, since obedience is the principal rule and the source of the greatest contentment among the Brothers.

I do not understand what you mean by saying that you are disgusted with the way you are treated. Explain this to me, and I will try to remedy what troubles you.

Be assured, my very dear Brother, that I want only your welfare and peace of mind and that I am,

Devotedly yours in our Lord,

De La Salle<sup>325</sup>

The second letter was written on 23 March 1708:

I think you are as well off as you could be, my very dear Brother, and that you ought to be satisfied with the Brother who is charged with directing you now.

So try to carry out your duties well, and apply yourself to your spiritual exercises, for it is these that will sanctify you and lead you to God.

Resolve to become very recollected, and take all possible means to do so.

Act in such a way as to increase the number of your students as much as you can.

I am quite convinced that the Brother who is with you is not at all annoying and that you are satisfied with him.

Aren't you ashamed of saying, "Imagine such a handsome young man as I am in such a vocation as this?"

You are very fortunate to be in your vocation, which is holy and leads to holiness and which does you honor both in this life and for your salvation.

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325. *Letters*, 55.

What a wonderfully handsome young man you are! How can you talk about yourself like that! Is this the way a religious should speak?

If I am not satisfied with the letters you write, it is because you sometimes write offensively. Be careful to write more discreetly and more courteously.

Surely you see that it is very wrong to get angry and to harbor resentment.

You also see that it is very bad to lose your temper and follow your feelings; that is to act more like an animal than a reasonable being.

Take care not to let yourself be carried away by impatience in class, for that is not the way to establish order or silence.

Answering back is detrimental to the obedience you should practice.

It is very wrong to let yourself be carried away by every idea that comes into your head, for many such thoughts are wrong.

Let yourself be guided by obedience, and you will see that God will bless you.

I beg him to pour out his graces on you, and I am, my very dear Brother,

Devotedly yours in our Lord,

De La Salle<sup>326</sup>

Mathias, for all his shortcomings, seems to have been a successful teacher. On 10 October 1707, the municipal council of Mende recorded special thanks to the bishop of the city for having brought the three teachers of M. de La Salle to teach their children, adding their satisfaction for the “marvelous results” accomplished by the three Brothers.<sup>327</sup>

One other trait of Mathias can be presumed. He must have had a great respect, if not love, for De La Salle to have preserved to the end the rather uncomplimentary letters that the Founder had sent to him. For this, posterity is also grateful.

From one of De La Salle's letters, the existence of a certain Brother Cyprien is known, although nothing further about him is recorded. Mathias had asked if he could be transferred to live with Cyprien.

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326. *Ibid.*, 60.

327. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, pp. 356–357.

De La Salle wrote:

I don't think that I will place you with Brother Cyprien. Brother Albert [the Director of the community] is not the type for you. You often don't realize what you are asking.<sup>328</sup>

The Founder may have had tongue in cheek when he wrote that last sentence, for Mathias may have known well enough that Brother Albert, probably in the community of Troyes as Director at that time, shared Mathias's yearning to be out of the community visiting the town or its people. One other fact about Brother Cyprien is that he died in Rethel in 1713.<sup>329</sup>

### Brother Paulin and Brother Séverin

Two additional letters, not written to Mathias but found with the ten sent to him, were addressed by De La Salle to two other Brothers, Paulin<sup>330</sup> and Séverin,<sup>331</sup> both of whom may have left the Institute around the same time as Mathias, perhaps also from the same community of Avignon. Little is known about these two Brothers. Félix-Paul speculates that the three of them may have lived together.<sup>332</sup> Perhaps they may even have set up a parish school in Pernes. It would not be unusual for former Brothers to continue in the work of teaching and to maintain a close association with one another.

The letter to Paulin was probably written in 1705, when he was working in one of the schools in Rouen and living in the General Hospice. There is a reference in the letter to the fact that Paulin was finding the work in Rouen difficult, which is understandable considering that the Brothers were not only teaching large classes but also taking care of the poor in the hospice.<sup>333</sup>

There is some evidence that Paulin was one of the first two Brothers (the other was Joachim) to teach in the school of the parish of Saint Laurent in Marseille in 1706.<sup>334</sup> Both Paulin and Joachim seem to have been changed from Rouen to Marseille at the same time. In 1708 Joachim was in Mende, and it is possible that Paulin was also

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328. *Letters*, 61.2.

329. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 248.

330. *Letters*, 36.

331. *Ibid.*, 51.

332. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 266.

333. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 3, *Cahiers lasalliens* 8, pp. 23ff.

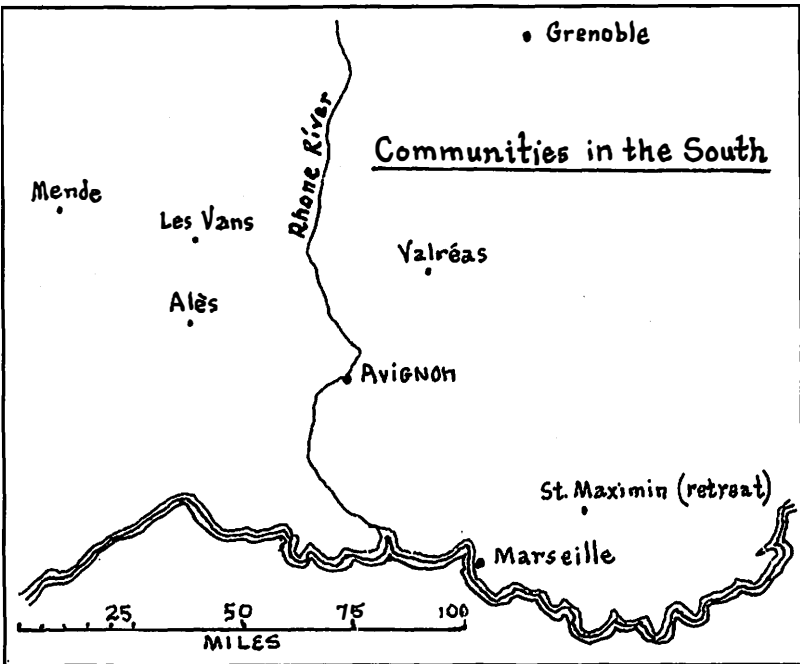
334. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 262.

transferred from Marseille around that time and that he lived with Mathias in Avignon before leaving the Institute.<sup>335</sup>

The letter to Séverin was written on 13 July 1706 and is the Founder's answer to the Brother's qualms of conscience about the need to make restitution after having calumniated a deceased woman. De La Salle assures Séverin that he need not worry, that what he has already done is sufficient, that he should follow the advice of his confessor, and that De La Salle himself frees Séverin from all guilt in the matter.

### Brother Louis (2nd)

All that is known about this second Brother Louis is that he is listed in the community records of Laon as the Director from 1704 to 1706<sup>336</sup> and that he died in Rouen on 28 March 1709.<sup>337</sup>



335. *Ibid.*, p. 266.

336. *Cahiers lasalliens* 11, p. 197.

337. Manuscript *Obituary*.

## Brothers Who Entered from 1701 through 1705

Name	Diocese	Born	Entered	Died
Luc (Gérard Sertel)	Senlis	?	1701	1730
Hyacinthe (Gentien Gastignon)	Blois	1669	1701	1751
Sébastien (Jean-Baptiste Trirriion)	Reims	1682	1701	1745
Simon (2nd) (Lambert Coron)	Cambrai	1672	1701	1728
Marc (Jean Morel)	Paris	1677	1702	1728
Félix (Claude Bequet)	Noyon	1676	1702	1745
Alexis (Jourdain)	Amiens	?	1702	?
Jean-Baptiste (Michel Servin)	Chartres	1673	1703	1733
Isidore (Théodore Gaspard Lambert)?	?	?	?	?
Bernardin (Pierre-Martin Ronsin)	Reims	1686	1704	1751
Hilaire (Edme-Thomas Rivot)	Auxerre	1682	1704	1739
Joachim (François Chable)	Auxerre	1682	1704	?
Urbain (François du Nas)	Chartres	1675	1704	?
Basile (Théopiste Chereau)	Blois	1677	1704	?
Bruno (Barthélemy Puroge)	Auxerre	1683	1704	1737
Adrien (Étienne Le Narré)	Paris	1673	1705	1716
Fiacre (Jacques Nonnez)	Châlons-sur-Marne	1683	1705	1756
Antonin (Gervais-Protais Dubrecq)	Paris	1685	1705	1756
Jérôme (Thomas Bavant)	Rouen	1670	1705	?
Michel (Vincent Floquet)	Laon	1680	1705	1762
Jacques (2nd) (Charles Bouilly)	Laon	1679	1705	1760
Romain (Nicolas Le Hucher)	Rouen	1670	1705	?
Honoré (Nicolas du Moutier)	Laon	1661	1705	1721
Eustache (Sébastien Couvret)	Chartres	1666	1705	1729
Pacôme (André Sceillier)	Paris	1675	1705	1717
Gervais (Louis Sceillier)	Paris	1679	1705	1741

Although Brother Barthélemy also entered in 1703, his story will be told in a separate chapter.

The story of Brother Isidore has already been told in the account of Brother Hubert, who entered in 1700.

The stories of the last two on this list, Brothers Pacôme and Gervais, have also been told, along with that of their father, Brother Hilarion (who entered the same time with them), as also that of their other brother, Brother Dominique, in the account of the fifth member of this family, Brother Théodore, who entered the Institute in 1700.<sup>338</sup>

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338. See pp. 110–114.

Two others in the group that entered from 1701 through 1705, Brothers Alexis and Urbain, are listed as having left the Institute; nothing further is known about Urbain. The *Catalogue* states that Alexis “made vows for all his life,” but he evidently left between 1714, when the record of the *Catalogue* was started, and 1716, when another Brother Alexis is listed in the *Catalogue*.

Very little is known about seven Brothers in this group who entered from 1701 through 1705:

- ◆ Brother Luc (G rard Sertel) entered in 1701 and died in Marseille in 1730.
- ◆ Brother Marc (Jean Morel) entered in 1702 and died in Calais in 1728.
- ◆ Brother F lix (Claude Bequet) entered in 1702 and also died in Calais, in 1745.
- ◆ Brother Jean-Baptiste (Michel Servin) entered in 1703 and died in Reims in 1733.
- ◆ Brother Bruno (Barth lemy Purorge) entered in 1704, was the Director of the community in Darn tal for a number of years, and died at Saint Yon in 1737.
- ◆ Brother Adrien ( tienne Le Narr ) entered in 1705 and died in Guise in 1729.
- ◆ Brother Eustache (S bastien Couvret) entered in 1705 and died in Laon in 1729.

All persevered until their deaths, giving a combined total of almost 200 years of service to the Institute, yet there is practically no record of all their years of work. Such, perhaps, is the lot of most of the teachers in the history of the world.

## Brother Hyacinthe

Brother Hyacinthe (Gentien Gastignon) was born in Saint-Denis-sur-Loire, diocese of Blois, on 1 November 1669 and entered the Institute at the age of thirty-two on 4 May 1701.<sup>339</sup> *Livret des Premiers Vœux* has the vow formula he made for all his life on 3 June 1703.<sup>340</sup> The vows he took as a serving Brother were of obedience and stability.

339. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 37.

340. Ibid., p. 18.

Serving Brothers did not take the vow of association to keep gratuitous schools.

Hyacinthe was in Brother Hubert's community in Chartres in 1707; he was fourteen years older than Hubert and evidently had some difficulty getting along with a younger man in charge of him.

In 1709 he wrote to De La Salle about the new bishop's plan to change the residence of the Brothers, and he went to see De La Salle, most likely in Paris, to talk about this. He probably wrote the letter and came to see the Founder with Hubert's permission. De La Salle wrote Hubert that it was not necessary for Hyacinthe to write or come to see him, and he added that Hyacinthe did not agree with Hubert about the suitability of the proposed residence for the Brothers.<sup>341</sup>

Probably as a result of this relationship with Hubert, Hyacinthe was transferred to another community at the end of that school year. He may have been transferred to Versailles, for he was there in April 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit in preparation for the General Assembly.<sup>342</sup>

Hyacinthe was at the founding of the Brothers' community in Saint-Omer on 16 October 1720. In all these assignments, he was working as a serving Brother, most likely as a cook, but doing some substitute teaching from time to time.

In 1723 Brother Timothée authorized Hyacinthe to make the vows of a teaching Brother and appointed him to be the Director of the community in Mende when that community was reopened after having been closed during the plague of 1720–1721; he remained there until 1729.<sup>343</sup>

Hyacinthe renewed his vows according to the Bull of Approbation on 22 September 1733.<sup>344</sup> He was Director of the community in Saint-Denis in 1740 and died in Chartres on 13 April 1751.<sup>345</sup>

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341. *Letters*, 11.1.

342. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 186.

343. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 428.

344. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 206.

345. Manuscript *Obituary*.

## Brother Sébastien

Brother Sébastien (Jean-Baptiste Tririon) was born in Varennes, diocese of Reims, on 5 March 1682 and entered the Institute on 22 May 1701. He took vows for three years, though the date is not given.<sup>346</sup> He made perpetual vows on 22 September 1725 at Saint Yon.<sup>347</sup>

In 1706 Sébastien was on the list of the Brothers forbidden to teach in the parish of Saint Sulpice as a result of the lawsuit by the writing masters.

In 1707 he was sent with Brother Mathias to join Brother Ponce in the community of Mende, which was opened that year. They arrived on 21 June 1707, having come from Paris; the cost of their journey, sixty livres (six hundred dollars), which was refunded by the bishop, seems to indicate that they either came by coach or traveled on foot and had to pay for lodging at several stops along the way.<sup>348</sup>

Sébastien was probably paired with Mathias to help Mathias be more settled, for in two of the letters written to Mathias in 1708, De La Salle reminded him that he should not complain, since he was living with a companionable confrere in the person of Sébastien.<sup>349</sup> In a third letter to Mathias, De La Salle had to tell him that the shoes made for Sébastien were too small for Sébastien and that since they fit Mathias, Mathias should wear them.<sup>350</sup> On such serious matters the Superior had to intervene!

In 1708 Sébastien was sent to Grenoble with another Brother to open the Brothers' school in the parish of Saint Laurent; he was back again in Paris in 1709, then in due course was sent to Chartres, where he signed the agreement for the General Assembly when Brother Barthélemy visited there on 9 December 1716.<sup>351</sup>

At the General Chapter of 1734, Sébastien was listed as the former Director of Calais. He died in Guise on 20 June 1745.

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346. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 37.

347. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 251.

348. Ibid., p. 239.

349. *Letters*, 60.5, 61.5, 8.

350. Ibid., 62.9.

351. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 251; Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

## Brother Simon (2nd)

Brother Simon (Lambert Coron) was born on 30 May 1672 in the town of Condé-sur-l'Escaut in the diocese of Cambrai. He entered the Institute on 20 June 1701 and made vows for all his life, though the date is not given.<sup>352</sup>

Simon was sent with Brother Barnabé to open the school in Mâcon for the school year 1709–1710. Early in the next school year, on 22 December 1711, he and Barnabé were expelled from the town because people did not want to have religious as teachers and the Brothers were dressed like religious.<sup>353</sup> The bishop of the town did not intervene, most likely because the school had been opened by one of the priests without his advice and consent. This event has already been described in the story about Brother Barnabé.

Simon was in Reims when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there on 28 February 1717,<sup>354</sup> and he died in Reims on 19 March 1728.<sup>355</sup>

## Brother Bernardin

Brother Bernardin (Pierre-Martin Ronsin) was born on 4 April 1686 in the town of Auvillers, diocese of Reims, and entered the Institute in 1704.<sup>356</sup> Rigault describes him and Timothée as two tireless helpers of De La Salle in the south of France during the most difficult moments of the Founder's apostolic work.<sup>357</sup>

Avignon is Bernardin's first assignment of record, where he is described as an excellent teacher in charge of the first class on the occasion of De La Salle's visit there in 1712.<sup>358</sup> When the Founder left Avignon to go to Marseille, he took Bernardin with him, possibly with the intent of also taking him to Rome with him in order to give Brother Gabriel a companion.<sup>359</sup> As it turned out, De La Salle did not go to Rome, and he planned to have Bernardin be the Director for the parish school of Saint Martin in Marseille, a project that was not achieved

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352. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 37.

353. Poutet, *Le XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, pp. 59, 248.

354. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

355. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 37.

356. Ibid., p. 39.

357. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 41–42.

358. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 58.

359. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 480.

because of the opposition to De La Salle and the Brothers that developed.<sup>360</sup>

As told in the story of Brother Henri, when De La Salle was on retreat in 1713 at the monastery of Saint Maximin, Bernardin came to visit him and brought him news of what was happening in Marseille and other communities in the south.<sup>361</sup> On learning of the death of Brother Médard, De La Salle sent Bernardin as Director to Mende.<sup>362</sup> He was there when De La Salle visited before going to Grenoble.

In 1714 De La Salle transferred Bernardin to Alès as the Director, and Bernardin remained there until 1720, when he was called upon by Brother Timothée, the new Superior, to be the Director of the two schools in Saint-Omer.<sup>363</sup> In the meantime, he had participated in the General Chapters of 1717 and 1720.

Bernardin was one of the thirty-one Brothers at the Chapter of 1725, which was held for the solemn reception of the Bull of Approbation. After the Chapter he joined with the others in renewing his vows according to the Bull. He also attended the transfer of the remains of the Founder from the church of Saint Sever to the chapel at Saint Yon in 1734 and the Chapter that followed.

In May 1732 he had opened the school in Valence, and he was called on again in 1745 to open another school, in Privas, the territory of militant Calvinists who challenged the presence of the Brothers.<sup>364</sup> When the town authority came to tell the Brothers that they had to leave, Bernardin responded that they had come at the request of the bishop and would leave only at his request.<sup>365</sup>

Brother Bernardin died in the community of Mirepoix in 1751 at the age of sixty-five. He had been a Brother for forty-eight years, one of the stalwarts who significantly supported De La Salle when he needed it most and contributed generously to the foundation of the Institute.

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360. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 292.

361. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, pp. 488–489.

362. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 377.

363. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 15.

364. *Ibid.*, p. 209.

365. *Ibid.*

## Brother Hilaire

Brother Hilaire (Edme-Thomas Rivot) was born on 10 April 1682 in the town of Escamps in the diocese of Auxerre, and he entered the Institute on 10 July 1704.<sup>366</sup> He was a serving Brother, and the first documentation about him is in a letter to Brother Denis in 1708, when De La Salle tells Denis that he should have nothing to do with Hilaire when he visits Saint Yon on the mid-week half holiday.<sup>367</sup> Brother Barthélemy, Director of Novices at Saint Yon, may have written to De La Salle that Brother Denis was disturbing the novices or the community at Saint Yon on those occasions.

A letter to Brother Hubert in 1710 establishes that Brother Hilaire was present in the community of Chartres.<sup>368</sup> De La Salle tells Hubert not to teach Hilaire how to write; evidently the Founder wanted Hilaire to stick to his job as a serving Brother.

This letter is significant because in it De La Salle tells Hubert in clear terms that he wants the communities to have one person, a serving Brother, to take care of temporal affairs and another person, the Director, to be responsible for the school, the community, and the supervision of the serving Brother. De La Salle felt that the Directors were doing too much and neglecting the community spiritual exercises. He insists that Hubert make use of Hilaire as a serving Brother in charge of the temporal needs of the community. The Founder's plan, however, was not well received by the Directors, and when the Rule was revised by them at the General Chapter of 1717, it was not included.<sup>369</sup>

In 1710, while Hilaire was with Hubert, the tension over the separation of powers was going on. Hilaire was probably the cook for the community at that time. De La Salle remarks that the Brothers of Hubert's community feel that Hubert is in a bad humor because of Hilaire's being in charge of the money. Hilaire has told the Founder that Hubert is asking for money to spend as he pleases. De La Salle tells Hubert that he, Hubert, is more strict than the Founder himself, as well as other Directors, and that this is not wise. De La Salle says that Hilaire should not give the money to the Director but should buy what is needed. "You are to hand the money over to him," De La

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366. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 39.

367. *Letters*, 5.4.

368. *Ibid.*, 12.30.

369. Cf. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 213–214.

Salle writes to Hubert. "If he doesn't buy what is needed, let me know, and I will certainly see that he does so."<sup>370</sup>

Hilaire returned to Saint Yon in due time; his presence there is documented on the occasion of Barthélemy's visit to the community on 7 May 1717.<sup>371</sup> He also signed the special document agreeing with the purchase of Saint Yon in 1718; on this document he is listed as the doorkeeper and the tailor.<sup>372</sup> Perhaps he had not been that good a cook. He signed another legal document regarding the ownership of Institute property in 1725, following the reception of letters patent and the Bull of Approbation.<sup>373</sup> He made his vows according to the Bull on 22 September 1734, and he died at Saint Yon on 17 May 1739.<sup>374</sup> A Brother for thirty-five years, he must have been an interesting person to live with.

## Brother Joachim

Brother Joachim (François Chable) was born on 18 February 1683 in the town of Ouzéy in the diocese of Sées. He entered the Institute in 1704 and made vows for all his life, but he is listed as having left the Institute.<sup>375</sup>

Joachim was assigned to the community of Rouen on November 1705, when the Brothers were living in the General Hospice and teaching in the schools of the city; he taught in the school of the parish of Saint Eloi.<sup>376</sup>

He is listed as one of the Brothers to open the school in the parish of Saint Laurent in Marseille with Brother Albert on 3 January 1706; on 2 September 1706, his name appears in the minutes of the meeting of the school's founders.<sup>377</sup>

In June 1708 he was sent to Mende;<sup>378</sup> in August 1709, with the Director, Brother Antoine, he was given a safe-passage document by the bishop in order to travel from Mende to Paris for retreat.<sup>379</sup> This is the last available record of him. He certainly did quite a bit of traveling with the Brothers.

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370. *Letters*, 12.35.

371. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 187.

372. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 418.

373. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 113.

374. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 39.

375. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

376. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 285.

## Brother Basile

Brother Basile (Théopiste Chereau) was born on 22 June 1677 in the town of Vendôme, in the diocese of Blois, and entered the Institute in 1704. The register states that he was dismissed from the Institute, but no date or explanation is given.<sup>380</sup> No information is available about his assignments before 1717, when he was present in the Rouen community of Brothers teaching in the four schools of that city.<sup>381</sup>

It was while he was in that community that he, with some other Brothers, was attacked by two drunken men with a sword and a club early in the morning when the Brothers were on their way to Mass.<sup>382</sup> The Brothers were quite able to fend off the attack but reported it to the police; Basile is listed as the principal complainant, probably because he was the oldest or the one who bore the brunt of the attack.<sup>383</sup> The date was 28 July 1717. De La Salle was quite upset that the Brothers had filed charges, though the charges were dismissed when the Brothers agreed in writing to accept the apologies of the two culprits. The Founder preferred that the Brothers practice the Gospel more faithfully by turning the other cheek and making no effort to secure justice.

On 12 June 1718, Basile and five other Brothers renewed their vows with De La Salle and Brother Barthélemy at Saint Yon. On the reverse side of the vow formula are their signatures, and after the name of Basile, he is identified as the “assistant teacher of the older boarders,” which probably meant those who were placed there by order of the king.<sup>384</sup> There is no further information available about Basile.

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377. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 262.

378. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

379. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 379.

380. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 40.

381. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

382. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 3, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 469–470.

383. Cahiers lasalliens 40/2, p. 86.

384. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 22.

## Brother Fiacre

Brother Fiacre (Jacques Nonnez) was born on 26 November 1683 in the town of Verrières, diocese of Châlons-sur-Marne, and entered the Institute at Saint Yon on 11 June 1705. He took vows for all his life.

The earliest document with his name is the one signed during Barthélemy's visit to the community of Boulogne on 21 March 1717; Fiacre was the Director of that community,<sup>385</sup> and in that capacity he attended the General Chapter of 1717. After the Chapter, he was assigned as Visitor for the communities in the north when Timothée was assigned to do the same work in the south of France.<sup>386</sup>

In November 1717, Fiacre was in the Paris community as the Visitor of the north when Barthélemy visited there to accept the community's endorsement of his election as Superior.

Fiacre's signature is on two formulas of the renewal of vows, one on 23 May 1717 with Brother Barthélemy and fifteen other Brothers, the other on 12 June 1718 with De La Salle, Brother Barthélemy, and five other Brothers. On the reverse of this latter formula, Fiacre is identified as "designated to visit the houses of our Society."

On 3 June 1718, he is named as one of the Brothers who formed a kind of executive committee to help Brother Barthélemy make important decisions before the next Chapter.<sup>387</sup>

Fiacre was a member of the Chapter of 1720, when Timothée was elected Superior; after the Chapter, Fiacre was assigned to replace Timothée as Visitor of the south and Director of the community in Avignon. As Director of Avignon, he attended the Chapter of 1725 for the solemn reception of the Bull of Approbation and renewed his vows according to the Bull.

In 1727 Fiacre was sent to Rome with Brother Thomas to give some long-awaited relief to Brother Gabriel after his twenty-five years of solitary life and work in the papal city. Fiacre was also commissioned by the Superior to pay his respects to the pope and offer him the thanks of the Institute for granting the Bull of Approbation.<sup>388</sup> He stayed when Thomas and Gabriel returned to France. He was assisted later by Brother Sylvestre but returned to France himself in 1732 to resume his posts as Director of the community in Avignon and Visitor for the communities in the south.

385. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

386. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 366.

387. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 419.

388. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 117.

Fiacre signed an agreement in 1735 to provide Brothers for the school in Die. The contract caused a stir back in Saint Yon, because one of the subjects included in it was Latin. Fiacre may not have read the fine print which forbade the Brothers themselves to teach Latin. The school began in 1736 with a priest on the faculty to teach Latin.<sup>389</sup>

Fiacre no doubt attended the General Chapters of 1734, 1745, and 1751. He died on 15 December 1756 in the community of Lunéville, which is located in Lorraine.

A word about Lunéville: this was the municipal residence of Stanislas Leczinski, Duke of Lorraine by treaty with France and formerly king of Poland. He was the father-in-law of Louis XV and had a deep concern for the education of the poor. His interest was such that he visited Saint Yon to see the work of the Brothers and generously arranged for the support of schools like Saint Yon for his capital city, Nancy, as well as in Lunéville, in Metz, and for the town of Maréville, near Nancy. It was Brother Exupère who represented the Brothers in the arrangements made with the duke.<sup>390</sup> It is probable that Fiacre was living in retirement at that time in the community of Lunéville, where he later died in 1756 at the age of seventy-three.

There is no mention of Fiacre's death in Lucard's *Annales*, which seems strange, because Lucard generally gives such notice for Brothers who have made notable contributions to the work of the Institute. Fiacre certainly was a competent and loyal Brother who did great work for the Institute. No doubt there is some testimony to him in the files of the Institute which has not yet been published.

## Brother Antonin

Brother Antonin (Gervais-Protais Dubrecq) was born on 18 March 1685 in the parish of Saint Nicolas in Paris and entered the Institute on 17 May 1705. He died in Reims on 14 November 1756, a Brother for more than fifty years. Unfortunately, little is known of his life during all those years.

In a letter written on 30 January 1708 to Brother Hubert, Director of the community in Guise, De La Salle writes:

If Brother Antonin has no confidence in you, it is because you do not win it by your reserve, your seriousness, and your fidelity to

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389. *Ibid.*, pp. 201–202.

390. *Ibid.*, pp. 280–281.

the Rule. You do not show sufficient prudence or fidelity to the Rule, and this draws down on you the disdain of the others.<sup>391</sup>

In another letter of 18 April, probably in the same year, the Founder, again addressing Hubert, says, “You should encourage Brother Antonin to be frank and to tell you everything with simplicity.”<sup>392</sup> At the time, Hubert was twenty-five years old and learning how to be a Director; Antonin, at the age of twenty-three and probably in his first community, was also learning, especially how to live in community.

The next documented fact available for this study is Brother Antonin’s signature on the document of the community of Rouen when Brother Barthélemy visited there on 27 March 1717.<sup>393</sup> It is also known that he made perpetual vows in 1734 and, as Director of the community in Laon, was a delegate to the Chapters of 1745 and 1751.<sup>394</sup>

## Brother Jérôme

Brother Jérôme (Thomas Bavant) was born on 1 October 1670 in the town of Yébleron, diocese of Rouen, and entered the Institute in 1705. The *Catalogue* states that he made vows for all his life but that he was dismissed from the Institute on 3 May 1728. No explanation of this is given.<sup>395</sup>

Jérôme is one of those who signed the agreement for the General Assembly of 1717 when Brother Barthélemy visited the Paris community in preparation for the Assembly.<sup>396</sup> Jérôme was also in Paris in November 1717 when Barthélemy returned there to secure the Brothers’ acceptance of his election by the Assembly.<sup>397</sup> This is all the information available on Brother Jérôme.

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391. *Letters*, 9.16.

392. *Ibid.*, 10.17.

393. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 186.

394. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 198.

395. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 41.

396. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 186.

397. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

## Brother Michel (2nd)

Brother Michel (Vincent Floquet) was born on 10 December 1680 in the town of Marle, diocese of Laon, and entered the Institute in 1705. He made vows for all his life and persevered until his death on 10 April 1762 at the age of eighty-one.<sup>398</sup>

Michel was in Paris on 25 April 1717 when Brother Barthélemy visited there on his tour of the communities before the General Assembly of 1717.<sup>399</sup> His name on the agreement of the community to the proposal for the General Assembly is the second one after the name of the Director, Brother Jean, which may mean that Michel was the Sub-Director. After the Assembly, he was called to be the Director of the school community in Rouen<sup>400</sup> and named by the new Superior, Barthélemy, to the special group which the Superior could consult on important decisions before the next General Chapter.<sup>401</sup>

Michel attended the Chapter of 1725 as Sub-Director of the community in Versailles,<sup>402</sup> also the Chapter of 1734<sup>403</sup> and the Chapter of 1745.<sup>404</sup> He was one of the Brothers called on for more than fifty-six years to do important work in the Institute before and after the death of the Founder.

## Brother Jacques (2nd)

Brother Jacques (Charles Bouilly) was born on 11 February 1679 in the town of Marchais, diocese of Laon, and entered the Institute on 15 August 1705. The register states that he took vows for three years.<sup>405</sup>

Jacques was in Grenoble when De La Salle stayed with the Brothers there in 1713–1714; contrary to Rigault,<sup>406</sup> he was not the Director; Brother Jean Jacquot was the Director at that time.<sup>407</sup> Jacques was the Director of Grenoble, however, in 1716,<sup>408</sup> and on 26 January

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398. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 41.

399. Ibid.

400. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

401. Ibid., p. 419.

402. Ibid., 2, p. 108.

403. Ibid., p. 147.

404. Ibid., p. 299.

405. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 41.

406. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 379.

407. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 218.

408. Ibid.

1717, when Brother Barthélemy visited the community on his tour in preparation for the General Assembly.<sup>409</sup>

Jacques was the Brother whom De La Salle sent to Paris in 1713 to learn from Barthélemy how the Institute was getting along in the north.<sup>410</sup> It was on this occasion that De La Salle took over Brother Jacques's role as teacher in the school of the Saint Laurent parish during his absence.

Jacques came to the Assembly of 1717 as a representative of the communities in the south, along with Timothée from Avignon and Bernardin from Alès.<sup>411</sup> He was also at the Chapter of 1720 for the election of Timothée as Superior and again at the Chapter of 1725, when he was Director of the community in Alès. On that occasion he renewed for all his life his vows according to the Bull of Approbation.

Brother Jacques died in Angers on 16 July 1760. He was another of those few Brothers to be over eighty years of age at the time of his death.

## Brother Romain

Brother Romain (Nicolas Le Hucher) was born on 8 September 1670 in Saint Michel parish in the city of Rouen and entered the Institute on 23 November 1705. He made vows for all his life, and he died in Paris between 1714, when he is registered in the *Catalogue*, and September 1719, when the name Romain was given to another Brother.<sup>412</sup> He was the Director of Troyes in 1717, when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there on the tour of the communities,<sup>413</sup> but he was unable to attend the General Assembly in May of that year, probably because of the need to stay with the school.<sup>414</sup> No other information about Brother Romain is available.

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409. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

410. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 381.

411. *Ibid.*, p. 410.

412. Cahiers lasalliens 3, pp. 41, 64.

413. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

414. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 410.

## Brother Honoré

Brother Honoré (Nicolas du Moutier) was born on 2 January 1661 in the town of Liesse, diocese of Laon, and entered the Institute on 15 December 1705 at the age of forty-four. He took vows for all his life,<sup>415</sup> probably as a serving Brother. He had been a domestic in the house of the Prince of Soubise,<sup>416</sup> though this is questioned by Hermans.<sup>417</sup> He was in the community of the school Brothers in Rouen, probably as the cook, when Barthélemy visited there on 27 March 1717.<sup>418</sup>

According to Rigault,<sup>419</sup> Brother Honoré's association with the Prince of Soubise proved valuable to the Institute in the following way. The prince was the father of Armand-Gaston, who became Cardinal Rohan, archbishop of Strasbourg and the French ambassador to the court in Rome. Both Barthélemy and Timothée, as Superiors, took Honoré with them when they made their courtesy calls to the cardinal, who was very happy to meet the former servant of his father's household.

In 1721, when Timothée was sending to Rome the package of materials with his petition for recognition of the Institute, he had Brother Honoré, accompanied by another Brother, bring these to the cardinal's residence. Though Honoré was unable to meet the cardinal, who was preparing for his trip to Rome, one of the cardinal's secretaries, M. Jean Vivant, welcomed the Brothers and promised to deliver the petition to the proper authorities in Rome. This M. Vivant was the brother of M. François Vivant, who had earlier helped the Brothers in Paris ward off the encroachments of M. de Brou.<sup>420</sup>

Brother Honoré brought these materials to the cardinal's residence in the spring of 1721. In August of that year, Honoré died in Paris at the age of sixty.

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415. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 42.

416. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 67.

417. Cahiers lasalliens 11, p. 110, note 1.

418. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

419. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 67–68, 74–75.

420. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 19, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 189ff.

## Some Additional Stories by Blain

The supplement to Canon Blain's biography of De La Salle includes three chapters intended to inspire the reader and be a warning to the Brothers. It is clear that Blain had the Brothers in mind when he was writing his entire opus on the Founder. He may well have had a feeling of responsibility for the Institute as one of its appointed ecclesiastical superiors, in his case for the diocese of Rouen, especially since the novitiate and the Institute administration were in Rouen. He was quite disturbed when some Brothers criticized his two volumes on the life of De La Salle because of certain unflattering remarks made about the early Brothers. In response to the criticism, he wrote a lengthy letter defending himself, which was given support by Brother Timothée, the Superior.<sup>421</sup>

The first of the three chapters in the supplement describes, among other edifying things, several incidents in the lives of the early Brothers that seemed to be miraculous or at least a sign of the care that Providence was taking of the Christian Schools. An example is the collapse of a classroom ceiling immediately after the last two pupils had gone down the stairs, an incident related earlier in the life of Brother Charles.

The second chapter relates stories about the premature and often sudden death by which God seemed to punish certain Brothers for their neglect of the duties of their vocation. Blain relates five stories of different young Brothers who began their lives as Brothers fervently but gradually became negligent and drawn away from their duties. Two of them became too ambitious for careers as calligraphers; one was seduced by an inheritance he received; a fourth formed a liaison with a young woman, and the fifth was beset by inconstancy and independence. All were struck down suddenly by one kind of illness or another and died quickly, though still Brothers. Blain concludes that all had been blessed with robust health, yet all died before the age of thirty because the Lord was displeased with their negligence.

Blain does not give the names of these Brothers, but one account coincides with the facts known about Brother Médard, whose brief story has been told in connection with the life of Brother Henri Pelard.

In a similar vein, the third chapter of this part of the supplement recounts "the evils that pursued and overwhelmed Brothers who have shamefully abandoned their vocation." Blain states frankly that he is

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421. Blain, vol. 2, the final four pages.

writing this chapter “to impress on all the Brothers an ever-renewed respect for their vocation and an effective resolution to fulfill its obligations with fervor and an infinite fear of abandoning it.”

One example Blain gives is of a young man in the rue Neuve community during the time when De La Salle was absent and Brother Henri L'Heureux was acting Director. The young man first had the idea of joining another religious order in search of greater perfection. He actually absconded in clothes belonging to the community. Then he came back, only to leave again, this time to sign up on ship, get involved in smuggling tobacco, and be thrown into jail. He was released from jail, only to quarrel with dangerous people, one of whom stabbed him to death with a sword.

Another Brother fancied himself gifted in prescribing for the sick. He had a special cure for typhoid fever. He was in Laon and became quite popular with the people. When Barthélemy tried to transfer him to another community, he refused to go, and he left the Institute. But then he found out that people lost their confidence in him once he was no longer a Brother. He tried for a time to live the life of a hermit, but the clergy disapproved of this. He then became the caretaker of a store of grain and ended up getting horribly murdered by some shepherds when he may have been trying to defend what he was guarding.<sup>422</sup>

This last account seems to correspond with what is known about a Brother René (Jean-Baptiste Soyaux), who was cofounder and Director of the community in Les Vans in September 1713.<sup>423</sup> He was a member of the community in Laon on 4 March 1717, when Brother Barthélemy visited there.<sup>424</sup> In a history of the community of Laon, there is an account of an unnamed Brother similar to Blain's version in the supplement. The history cites as witnesses two Brothers who were living with René in 1717: André, the Director, and Eustache.<sup>425</sup>

Félix-Paul suggests that René's name is crossed out in the *Catalogue* because whoever kept the *Catalogue* did not want René's name associated with the Institute.

Altogether Blain tells the stories of ten Brothers who left the Institute and ended up unhappily. He gives the name of only one, Brother Onésime, who does not appear in the *Catalogue*, probably for the same reason that René's name was crossed out. Onésime made

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422. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 207–208.

423. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, pp. 369–370.

424. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

425. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 207–208.

the novitiate in the *Grande Maison* at the age of twenty, and he did well in the beginning, but about the year 1707, he became a real good-for-nothing. His major fault was becoming too familiar with the pupils.

On one occasion in Guise, he was carelessly playing with a youngster and in the process pierced the lad's tongue with a sharp instrument. The father complained to the police, and the Brother was expelled from town. De La Salle then stationed Onésime in the school of the parish of Saint Roch in Paris. There he was caught in other scandalous behavior, which resulted in the dismissal of all the Brothers from the parish! Onésime himself fled but eventually asked to be readmitted, and he was accepted by De La Salle.

While there is some ambiguity about the nature of Onésime's scandalous behavior, it seems that it was not of an overtly sexual nature. The Rule of that time states clearly that no one will be tolerated in the Institute in whom anything exterior against chastity has appeared or appears.<sup>426</sup>

De La Salle assigned Onésime to the boarding school at Saint Yon. It happened that while the Founder was absent, Onésime once again dishonored his employment by shameful conduct. When the vicar-general of Rouen heard of the incident, he ordered the dismissal of the poor Brother from the Institute. De La Salle was still away, and the Brothers gladly put into effect the vicar-general's order. When De La Salle returned, Onésime once again applied for readmission. This time, while the General Assembly was being held in 1717, the Founder turned the decision over to the Brothers, and they unanimously rejected the request.

Onésime continued as a teacher in a village near Chartres, which was his native town. He died there in 1720, apparently of natural causes, and the Brothers of Chartres were informed of his death by one of his relatives.

Onésime, René, and Médard are three Brothers not listed in *Livret des Premiers Vœux* or the *Catalogue* but described by Blain in the supplement to his life of the Founder. They could be part of the second generation; they have been added here separately because of a lack of certainty concerning their lives as Brothers.

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426. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 71.

# Chapter Five

## After the Second Generation

Following the so-called second generation, which has been presented in the previous chapter, there are ninety-three Brothers of record who entered the Institute from 1706 until the death of De La Salle on 7 April 1719. In this chapter their stories will be given in the order of their entrance into the Institute, as recorded in the *Catalogue*.<sup>1</sup> For ease in presenting such a large number, they will be arranged in four groups of three or four years each. There is little information about many, and these Brothers will be presented briefly together. For others there is a good deal of record which adds to the history of the first De La Salle Brothers.

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1. Cahiers lasalliens 3, pp. 42–62.

## Brothers Who Entered from 1706 through 1709

Name	Diocese	Born	Entered	Died
Maurice (Nicolas Robinet)	Reims	1686	1706	1715
Dosithée (Claude Longière)	Lyon	1671	1706	1737
Léonard (Claude Dufaux)	Laon	1666	1706	1746
François (2nd) (Georges Bertin)	Beauvais	1683	1706	1755
Dominique (2nd) (Claude-Antoine Faverot)	Besançon	1683	1706	?
Anselme ( ? )	Autun	?	1706	?
Didace (Pascal de Moncrif)	Meaux	1676	1706	1752
Casimir (Charles Dubreuil)	Paris	1686	1706	1742
Georges ( ? Coulon)	Autun	1687	1706	?
Augustin (Philippe Noël)	Beauvais	1683	1706	1759
Léon (Jean Le Maître)	Rouen	1671	1707	1744
Jean-Chrysostome (Pierre Blin)	Rouen	1690	1707	1719
Maximin (Thomas François)	Evreux	1663	1707	1744
Maur (Claude Machon)	Lyon	?	1708	1738
Louis (3rd) (Jean Robin)	Dijon	1688	1709	1728
André (2nd) (Loup Bauneau)	Moulin	1685	1709	1743
Symphorien (Jean-Baptiste Hardy)	Reims	1693	1709	?
Côme (2nd) (Jean Vantier)	Rouen	1688	1709	1757
Anastase (Antoine Paradis)	Laon	1689	1709	1774
Hippolyte (Nicolas Cordier)	Reims	?	1709	?
Zosime (Thomas Poudrin)	Laon	1685	1709	1739
Roch (Armand Robert)	Laon		?	1709

Of this group of twenty-two Brothers, four did not persevere: Anselme—whose family name is not recorded and who is known only from a brief mention in one of De La Salle's letters to Brother Hubert, dated 2 October 1710—and three others about whom little or nothing is recorded except the fact that they left the Institute: Georges (Coulon), Symphorien (Jean-Baptiste Hardy), and Hippolyte (Nicolas Cordier).

Ten Brothers of this group gave an average of thirty-four years of service as Brothers, yet little is known about them. They are perhaps typical of teachers generally, people who do much good in the field of education faithfully for a long time but leave little or no record for history, except in the lives of those whom they have taught. The Brothers in this group with such a record of longevity are among those who preserved the spirit and work of the Founder for many years after his death.

These ten Brothers are:

- ◆ Maurice (Nicolas Robinet), who was a Brother for nine years;
- ◆ Léonard (Claude Dufaux), forty years a Brother;
- ◆ Didace (Pascal de Moncrif), who died at the age of seventy-six after forty-six years as a Brother;
- ◆ Casimir (Charles Dubreuil), thirty-six years;
- ◆ Augustin (Philippe Noël), fifty-three years;
- ◆ Léon (Jean Le Maître), a Brother for thirty-six years;
- ◆ Jean-Chrysostome (Pierre Blin), twelve years a Brother;
- ◆ Maur (Claude Machon), the only one on record who entered in 1708, a Brother for thirty years;
- ◆ Côme (Jean Vantier), a Brother for forty-eight years, who was the Director of Versailles in 1717 when Barthélemy visited there and who could have been one of the “principal Brothers” who signed the letter of recall to De La Salle on 1 April 1714;
- ◆ Zosime (Thomas Poudrin), a Brother for thirty years, one of the four who opened the school in Saint-Omer in 1720.

There are eight other Brothers in the group who entered during the years 1706 through 1709 about whom there is more information.

## Brother Dosithée

Before he became Brother Dosithée, Claude Longière was a person of wealth and a classical education who owned extensive vineyards in Ronne-en-Beaujolais.<sup>2</sup>

The first documented reference to Dosithée is in a letter written by De La Salle to Brother Joseph, probably in 1711, when Joseph was Visitor of the communities in the north. The reference is a gentle rebuke to the Visitor for having written a letter to Brother Dosithée: “Brother Dosithée would not have written to you if you had not first written to him. . . .”<sup>3</sup> Dosithée was probably a good friend of Joseph, having succeeded him as the Director of the school community in Rouen. Such letters of friendship were frowned on by the Founder, in

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2. *Vie du Frère Irénée*, p. 78.

3. *Letters*, 54.5.

accord with the spiritual ideals and training of the time. Brother Joseph probably had confessed his mistake in his letter to De La Salle.

Dosithée, as Director of the community in Rouen, was one of the six Brothers assembled by the Founder on 4 December 1716 to commission Brother Barthélemy to visit all the communities in preparation for the General Assembly. This commissioning event has already been told in the story of Brother Ambroise, who was also one of the six Brothers. Four months later, when Barthélemy made his visit to the community of Rouen, Dosithée signed, along with the community, the agreement for an Assembly.<sup>4</sup>

He attended the General Chapter of 1717, which elected Barthélemy as the first Superior, and the following year he was assigned to be the Director of the detention center (*pension de force*) for adults in Saint Yon. This assignment is appended to his signature on the document of 3 June 1718 affirming the purchase and ownership of Saint Yon.<sup>5</sup> In the same month, on 12 June, Dosithée was one of the six Brothers who renewed their vows with De La Salle and Barthélemy.<sup>6</sup> He was also named to the special council which would be advisory to the new Superior.<sup>7</sup>

In 1720, as Director of Saint Yon, he attended the Chapter to elect Brother Timothée as the second Superior.<sup>8</sup> He also attended the Chapter in 1725, which was held for the solemn reception of the Bull of Approbation and the renewal of vows according to the Bull. At that time he was listed as the business manager (*procureur*) for the large community in Paris;<sup>9</sup> later he was one of the signatories for the transfer of the ownership of all the Institute properties in Saint-Denis and Paris to Saint Yon.<sup>10</sup>

In 1729, when Brother Joseph, the Assistant, died, Brother Dosithée was elected by mail to succeed him. But in 1734, when the Brothers assembled for the transfer of the body of the Founder from the church of Saint Sever to the chapel at Saint Yon, Dosithée asked to be relieved of his assignment because of failing sight. His resignation was accepted at the Chapter which followed the ceremony of the transfer, and Brother Étienne Perotin was elected to replace him.<sup>11</sup>

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4. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

5. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 417.

6. Cahiers lasalliens 3, pp. 21–22.

7. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 418.

8. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 41; Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable J.-B. de La Salle*, 2, p. 293.

9. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 108.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 149.

Brother Étienne had entered the Institute in 1712, and his story will be told later. Dosithée continued for a while in his role as business manager for Paris, but soon he had to retire to Saint Yon, where he was given generous care by Brother Irénée. Dosithée died on 9 June 1737.<sup>12</sup> He was sixty-six years of age.

## Brother François (2nd)

The first assignment of record for Brother François (Georges Bertin) was at Saint Yon. In 1711 or 1712, De La Salle, preparing for his visit to the communities in the south of France, made a number of key assignments; François was appointed the Brother in charge (Prefect) of the boarding school in Saint Yon.<sup>13</sup> Lucard gives a list of the duties of the Prefect of the boarding school in Saint Yon as they evolved over the years. They were probably fairly well developed in 1712, since the boarding school had been opened around 1705.<sup>14</sup> The Prefect was responsible for the program of studies, the discipline of the pupils, the supervision of the teachers, as well as all relations with parents and any others who dealt with the school.<sup>15</sup>

Rigault also says that François was responsible for the development of the buildings of Saint Yon while he was acting as the Prefect of the boarders.<sup>16</sup> He is listed as the Director of Saint Yon itself when Barthélemy made his visit there in May 1717.<sup>17</sup>

François attended the Chapter in May 1717 and was one of the signatories of the document affirming the purchase and ownership of the property of Saint Yon on 3 June 1718; that year he was also appointed to the special council for the Superior.<sup>18</sup>

François attended the Chapters of 1720, 1725, and 1734 and was assigned as Director of the community in Rethel in 1729. He served notably as the Director until his death in Rethel on 11 September 1755; his funeral featured an extensive eulogy.<sup>19</sup> He was another of the first Brothers who served many years in the role of administration.

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12. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 43; VI, p. 78.

13. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 275.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

15. *Ibid.* pp. 333–335.

16. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 401.

17. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 187.

18. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, pp. 417–418.

19. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 265.

## Brother Dominique (2nd)

Brother Dominique (Claude-Antoine Faverot) was with Brother Jean-François in the community of Saint-Denis when Brother Barthélemy visited there on 18 April 1717.<sup>20</sup>

In 1725 he was a teacher of the older boarders at Saint Yon when he attended the General Chapter of 1725 and made his vows with the other Brothers according to the Bull of Approbation on 15 August of that year.<sup>21</sup>

The only other documentation involving Dominique is his signature on a copy of the minutes of the Chapter of 1725, which Brother Antoine Partois prepared, dated 14 December 1726.<sup>22</sup> Dominique died at Saint Yon, but no date is given on the register.<sup>23</sup>

## Brother Maximin

There is reason to believe that Brother Maximin (Thomas François) was assigned by Brother Ponce to assist Brother René shortly after the school in Les Vans was opened in 1711.<sup>24</sup> This was the last school initiated by De La Salle. The negotiations for the school were made by Brother Ponce, and this was probably the last thing Ponce did for the Founder.<sup>25</sup>

The town of Les Vans had a number of militant Calvinists who resented the fact that their children were required to attend the Brothers' school. One night their opposition reached its climax when they stormed the Brothers' house with the intent to destroy it and kill the Brothers or drive them away. The Brothers had gone to the chapel to pray and were saved by the timely intervention of the city magistrate. Those responsible for the attack were severely punished, so that the Brothers were not bothered by the same trouble again. De La Salle heard of the event and praised the Brothers for their courage, their recourse to God, and their perseverance.<sup>26</sup>

20. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

21. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 108.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

23. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 43.

24. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 223.

25. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 369.

26. Maillefer, Cahiers lasalliens 6, pp. 195–196; *Two Early Biographies*, pp. 144–145.

There are receipts signed for the community of Les Vans by Brother Maximin with Brother Henri, when Henri was the Director in 1713, and with Brother Ildéfonse in 1714, when Maximin was Director.<sup>27</sup> He held that position on 31 December 1717, when Brother Barthélemy visited Les Vans.<sup>28</sup>

Maximin was one of the Directors from the south of France who were unable to attend the Assembly of 1717.<sup>29</sup> In 1727 he was a member of the large community in Marseille when the Brothers were in charge of all the parish schools of the city, together with a hospice; his signature is on the request sent to the city officials for recognition as a religious congregation.<sup>30</sup> Brother Ambroise was the Director of the community, with ten Brothers working in the schools and three in the hospice. Brother Maximin died in Saint Yon on 15 July 1744.<sup>31</sup>

### Brother Louis (3rd)

Brother Louis (Jean Robin) entered in April 1709 and probably began his apostolate in Rouen. This seems clear from a letter De La Salle wrote to Brother Robert on 3 November 1710:

Please go to Rouen and tell the Director that he is to give you Brother Louis to live in community with you.

He is a good Brother, and I know you will be satisfied with him.<sup>32</sup>

Blain wrote a short biography of Brother Louis as part of the supplement to his life of the Founder.<sup>33</sup> It eulogizes Louis as a person of great virtue even from the time he entered the novitiate. His virtue was evidently solid, for he was made Director of the community in Laon at an early age, and he was well received by the Brothers, even those who were not easy to live with in community. Blain, in his usual fashion, speaks of Louis as living like a Carthusian during his twelve or thirteen years as Director in Rethel.

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27. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 370.

28. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

29. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 410.

30. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 176.

31. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 54.

32. *Letters*, 48.3 and 4.

33. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 80ff.

Even as a young man of twenty-one, Louis suffered severely from sciatica and underwent the gridiron treatment which the Founder also endured for the sake of a cure. This consisted of the patient being placed unclothed on a metal frame under which some juniper wood was slowly burned so that the vapors would penetrate the body. The heat was extremely painful, but apparently it had some good results. Still, Louis suffered greatly from this problem of sciatica when he had to make journeys on foot from Rethel to Paris for meetings of the Brothers, a journey of at least one hundred miles!

As Director of the community of Rethel, Louis attended the Chapters of 1717, 1720, and 1725 and made vows according to the Bull of Approbation after the Chapter, on 15 August 1725.<sup>34</sup> When Louis died in 1728, the pastor of the parish said, “We have lost a saint, the holiest one in my parish.” The dean of Rethel also paid Louis this tribute:

Previously the children were so wild that they would not come to confession, but after they had received instruction from Brother Louis, they showed the results in their behavior and in their good conduct. There were no more problems hearing their confessions, because the pupils knew very well how to confess their sins. This is the praise that was given about them by the confessors of the parish, and I, too, make about them, based on my own experience.<sup>35</sup>

## Brother André (2nd)

The earliest record of Brother André (Loup Bauneau) as a Brother is in the role of Director of Laon on 4 March 1717, when Brother Barthélemy visited that community.<sup>36</sup>

Brother René, whose story was told among the “Additional Stories” by Blain in the last chapter, was a member of the Laon community at that time. André and Eustache, another member of that community, gave their approval to the account of the sad end of Brother René in the Institute and of his violent death, which probably occurred around 1720.<sup>37</sup>

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34. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 192.

35. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 83.

36. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

37. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 207–208.

André attended the Chapters of 1717 and 1720 as Director of Laon.<sup>38</sup> At one point when he was Director of Laon, certain people of the city, other than the writing masters, were envious of the success and popularity of the Brothers' schools. One person even copied the handwriting and signature of Brother André and wrote defamatory notes and false statements, along with a memoir to the local authorities calumniating the Brothers. Providence intervened, according to the community records, and the falsehood of the accusations was revealed, so that the innocence of the Brothers was made clear.<sup>39</sup>

Brother André also attended the Chapter of 1725 as Director of the older boarders at Saint Yon.<sup>40</sup> He signed the copy of the minutes of the Chapter of 1725, which were prepared by Brother Antoine in December 1726.<sup>41</sup>

André was present in 1734 for the transfer of the remains of the Founder from the church of Saint Sever to the chapel at Saint Yon and attended the Chapter that followed.<sup>42</sup> He died at Saint Yon on 24 December 1743 at the age of fifty-eight, having served as a Brother for thirty-two years.

## Brother Anastase

De La Salle wrote a letter to Brother Anastase (Antoine Paradis) on 28 January 1711, when Anastase was probably in his first community; it is a classic expression of the basic spirituality taught by the Founder; Anastase was twenty-one or twenty-two years old:

Apply yourself above all, my very dear Brother, to be motivated by faith so that your actions may be well done.

I am very glad that your whole aim and intention is to do God's will.

In order to succeed in this, you should strive particularly to be entirely submissive and to observe your rules well, for it is in this that you will carry out God's will.

Take great care about prayer and try to do all your actions in a prayerful spirit. The more faithful you are in these matters, the more God will bless you.

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38. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 410; 2, p. 41.

39. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 414.

40. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 108.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

Often recollect yourself in order to renew and strengthen in your mind the remembrance of the presence of God. The more you strive to achieve this, the easier you will find it to perform your actions and carry out your duties well.

I am very pleased with the frame of mind that you say you have, to do all I want of you.

I ask God to give you in abundance the spirit of your state, and I am, my very dear Brother,

Devotedly yours in Our Lord,

De La Salle<sup>43</sup>

It is easy to understand why Brother Anastase kept this letter to the end of his long life of eighty-five years.

In March 1717, Anastase was a member of the community in Boulogne when Brother Barthélemy visited there.<sup>44</sup> He was in the Paris community the following November for Barthélemy's visit after the Assembly, to secure the Brothers' agreement for his election,<sup>45</sup> and again when Barthélemy visited the community in July 1718.<sup>46</sup>

He was the Director of Calais in May 1720 and received a long letter from Brother Barthélemy, Superior, which will be presented in the story of Barthélemy in the next chapter. As Director of Calais, he attended the General Chapter of 1720 that elected Brother Timothée as Superior that year. He also attended the Chapter of 1725 as the Sub-Director of the Paris community, and he made vows according to the Bull of Approbation following the Chapter.<sup>47</sup>

Anastase was a member of the Marseille community in 1727<sup>48</sup> and became the Director of the community in Grenoble in 1730.<sup>49</sup> In that capacity he attended the transfer of the remains of the Founder from the church of Saint Sever to the chapel at Saint Yon in 1734 and the Chapter that followed.<sup>50</sup> The next assignment of record for Brother Anastase was as Director for the opening of the community in Maréville in September 1749, an assignment indicative of his stature in the Institute at that time.<sup>51</sup>

43. *Letters*, 72.

44. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 186.

45. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

46. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 12.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 108, 115.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

49. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 15.

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

Anastase lived to be eighty-five years of age, retired in the community of Maréville. He became dean of the Institute in 1762, when Michel Floquet died, and he lived another twelve years, dying at Maréville on 8 April 1774.

## Brother Roch

Brother Roch (Armand Robert) was one of two nephews of Monsieur Jacques Gudvert who became Brothers. Gudvert, pastor of Saint Pierre in Laon, was an interesting personality, quite an ardent champion of Jansenism, and an appellant against the Bull *Unigenitus* but also an ardent supporter of the Brothers because of their fine work in the city of Laon. The other nephew who became a Brother was Pascal, who entered in 1711 and died in Paris before 1716.<sup>52</sup>

Brother Roch is known only for having been in the community of Moulins with the Director, Brother Philippe, in December 1717, when Brother Barthélemy visited there.<sup>53</sup> He died in Chartres, but the date is not given.<sup>54</sup>

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52. *Ibid.*, pp. 193–194; Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 53–54.

53. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

54. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 46.

## Brothers Who Entered from 1710 through 1712

Name	Diocese	Born	Entered	Died
Christophe (Jean Pellerin)	Rouen	1684	1710	?
Arsène (Noël Pellerin)	Rouen	1690	1710	?
Placide (Thomas Guyot)	Laon	1691	1710	1714
Mathias (Laurent de Douay)	Arras	1680	1710	?
Paulin (2nd) (Jean Grusel)	Reims	1695	1710	1755
Grégoire (2nd) (Jean Bouilly)	Laon	1680	1710	?
Rigobert (Charles Le Leu)	Laon	1688	1710	1753
Romuald (François Le Roux)	Rouen	1691	1710	?
Edouard (Claude Paris)	Chartres	1690	1710	?
Zacharie (Charles-Mathieu Haulterive)	Rouen	1671	1710	1730
Victor (Thomas Chevallier)	Reims	1684	1710	?
Guillaume (Louis Bichebois)	Reims	1688	1711	?
Pascal (Louis Bourgeois)	Laon	?	1711	?
Sérapion (Pierre Gausset)	Laon	?	1711	1715
Martinien (2nd) (Jean Lebreton)	Paris	1689	1711	?
Mathieu (2nd) (Gilles Pouillon)	Cambrai	1689	1711	1754
Laurent (2nd) (Jean-Bapt. La Chapelle)	Paris	1697	1711	?
Benoît (Robert Esbrayat)	Mende	c 1696	1711	1750
Stanislas (Pierre Jean)	Embrun	?	1711	1717
Damien (Jean Boujon)	Soissons	?	1712	1722
Étienne (Jean Perotin)	Reims	1688	1712	1752
Sulpice (Claude Derlin)	Amiens	1691	1712	1726
Germain (2nd) (Joseph Denis)	Toul	1687	1712	?
Hugues ( ? Melquion)	Embrun	?	1712	?

Eight of this group did not persevere as Brothers; little is known about their lives aside from the few facts in the *Catalogue*. They are Arsène (Noël Pellerin), Grégoire (Jean Bouilly), Edouard (Claude Paris), Guillaume (Louis Bichebois), Martinien (Jean Lebreton), Laurent (Jean-Baptiste La Chapelle), Germain (Joseph Denis), and Romuald (François Le Roux), for whom there is some probable explanation of his leaving the Institute.

There is a letter written to Brother Romuald by Brother Barthélemy which is preserved in the Generalate Archives; it is presumed to have been written early in January 1719, and in it Barthélemy defends the Founder's orthodoxy regarding the Bull *Unigenitus* and the controversy over Jansenism. It is presumed to have been addressed to Brother Romuald, because its language is similar to what is written about Romuald in another letter which the same Superior wrote to

Brother Anastase, Director of the community in Calais, on 20 May 1720.<sup>55</sup> This is what Barthélemy wrote about Romuald:

Brother Romuald apparently did not know all these circumstances [Barthélemy's fidelity to the Founder's position regarding the Bull *Unigenitus*] nor several others, since he made people think that I leaned toward the side of the appellants, which was false and unjust. All the Brothers of the Institute knew this very well, because I told them immediately after the death of our dear Father.

I could not allow anyone to accuse me on this matter, but nevertheless I do not think I am required to speak and to cry out heedlessly and to make a big display, as Brother Romuald wanted to do, by getting involved in making a catechism on the matters of the moment, and so on, which can never be appropriate for any Brother of our Society. They should keep silent rather than get involved with the details of the matter, which are beyond their ability. What the Brothers should do is to make known their attachment and submission to the Holy See and the Church very plainly and teach the doctrine of the Catholic, apostolic, and Roman Church in a catechetical manner.

Brother Romuald wants to be more learned than I, M. de La Salle, and M. Leschassier, Superior of the Major Seminary in Paris, and so on, and to take no regard of our advice on the subject.<sup>56</sup>

Romuald had been one of Barthélemy's novices at Saint Yon in 1710 but seems to have lost any novitiate docility by 1720.

Ten other Brothers of this 1710 to 1712 group have only a limited record of their lives beyond the facts given in the *Catalogue*. There is no date of death for four of them, and—with the exception of the two who were Brothers for thirty-eight and forty-five years—the average years as a Brother for the other four is only about eight. These Brothers are:

- ♦ Mathias (Laurent de Douay), a serving Brother who was sacristan and tailor at Saint Yon, died in Guise.
- ♦ Paulin (Jean Grusel), a Brother for forty-five years who worked in Versailles and Mende, was the second Brother Paulin (the first Paulin has been mentioned at the end of the stories about the Brothers who entered in 1700).

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55. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 210, note 1.

56. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 24–28.

- ◆ Victor (Thomas Chevallier) is listed as having died in Avignon, but there is no record of the date.
- ◆ Pascal (Louis Bourgeois), the second nephew of M. Jacques Gudvert in Laon (the other being Brother Roch), entered in 1709.
- ◆ Sérapion (Pierre Gausset) was a Brother for only four years.
- ◆ Mathieu (Gilles Pouillon), a Brother for thirty-eight years, was the second Brother Mathieu, the first being one of the eighteen Brothers involved in the lawsuit of the Paris writing masters in 1704.
- ◆ Stanislas (Pierre Jean) was a Brother for six years.
- ◆ Damien (Jean Boujon) was a Brother for ten years.
- ◆ Sulpice (Claude Derlin) was a Brother for fourteen years.
- ◆ Hugues ( ? Melquion), whose date of birth is not given, has no record of the place and date of his death.

There was evidently some neglect in keeping the *Catalogue* at that time for some of the Brothers, especially those who may have made their novitiate in Marseille or Avignon.

There is more information about six other Brothers of this group.

## Brother Christophe

Brother Christophe (Jean Pellerin) was in Guise on 7 March 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there.<sup>57</sup> Then, on 4 July 1718, he was in Dijon with Brothers Barnabé and Antoine.<sup>58</sup>

The Brothers in Dijon aroused the enmity of the writing masters because of the success they were having in drawing pupils to their schools. The guild of the writing masters had been able as early as 1667 to receive a kind of monopoly on the teaching of writing in the city of Dijon. They were able, therefore, to secure from the municipal authorities the right to investigate the Brothers' schools, especially the social and economic status of the pupils.

At nine o'clock one morning, the delegate from the Parliament of Dijon and the representatives of the writing masters visited the Saint Philibert school, where they found 172 pupils under the care of

57. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

58. Poutet, *Le XVIIe Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 2, p. 127.

Brothers Barnabé and Christophe, and then they went to the Saint Nicolas school, where Brother Antoine was teaching seventy-two pupils by himself.

Many of the fathers of the pupils in Saint Philibert were artisans: vinedressers, tavernkeepers, coachmen, carpenters, makers of straw cushions, and makers of crockery, but it was not stated in the report how many of these fathers were able to pay tuition. In the Saint Nicolas school, where the families of the pupils were presumably of the same social status, only eight or nine were classified as able to pay.<sup>59</sup>

The statutes of the writing masters were subsequently modified by the city, giving recognition to the Brothers and spelling out the limitations on the curriculum of their schools, similar to what had happened in Paris in 1706:

The Brothers of Christian Doctrine [sic] who teach in the charity schools founded recently in this city cannot take in boarders nor teach the elements of Latin but may teach only reading, writing, and arithmetic in accordance with the practices of their Institute and the intentions of the founders of the schools for the poor, whose fathers and mothers are unable to procure teaching from the said writing masters. The writing masters from time to time may visit these schools to learn if they conform to their Institute practices and the intentions of their founders.

The city restricted this statute by requiring that the visit of the writing masters be approved by the city council and accompanied by an officer of the police.<sup>60</sup>

Unfortunately, nothing further is recorded of the life of Brother Christophe, except that he died in Avignon.

## Brother Placide

Brother Placide (Thomas Guyot) seems to have begun his teaching in Reims, for in a letter to Brother Joseph, Director in Reims, in 1711, De La Salle says, "It seems advisable that Brother Placide go to Guise."<sup>61</sup>

Nothing further is recorded about Brother Placide, except what Brother Barthélemy said about him in a letter written to the communities in December 1714:

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59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., p. 128.

61. *Letters*, 54.2.

This good Brother died as he lived. He joined us at the age of nineteen and lived with us for four and a half years. He was from a good family, and his virtues were edifying: a great horror of the world and a great love for seclusion, a great openness of heart toward his superiors, an admirable obedience and observance of the Rule, a most edifying modesty, patience, and union with his Brothers, a great piety and much courage in the fight he waged against the demons.

He showed these virtues in his sickness and especially during his final illness, which lasted nine days, during which he did not cease to pray, despite great pain. Some moments before he died, he recited the *Te Deum* and the *Gloria in excelsis*, sang a canticle, and had the happiness of seeing Jesus Christ and his holy Mother; he died shortly afterward, very joyfully, very happily, and very peacefully. . . .<sup>62</sup>

## Brother Rigobert

Brother Rigobert (Charles Le Leu) was in the community of Boulogne when Brother Barthélemy visited there on 21 March 1717<sup>63</sup> and was the Director on 5 May 1720 when Barthélemy wrote to the Director of Calais, Brother Anastase, in order to arrange for the transfer of Brother Hilarion from Calais to Boulogne.<sup>64</sup> Barthélemy mentions in the letter that he is asking Rigobert to send Brother Tite, whose story will be told later, to replace Hilarion.

As Director of the community in Boulogne, Rigobert attended the General Chapter of 1720, when Brother Timothée was elected Superior, and again the Chapter of 1725 for the solemn reception of the Bull of Approbation and the renewal of vows according to the Bull, which followed the Chapter.<sup>65</sup>

The only other reference to Rigobert in the known records is his signing of an agreement with the officials of the city of Ardres (not far from Boulogne) on 2 March 1728 for two Brothers, with stipends and accommodations, to teach in schools in Ardres and nearby Brêmes. He was evidently acting in the name of Brother Timothée, Superior.<sup>66</sup>

62. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 42.

63. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

64. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 26.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

## Brother Zacharie

Brother Zacharie (Charles-Mathieu Haulterive) was probably a serving Brother and was in Paris when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there on 25 April 1717.<sup>67</sup> He was also in Paris the following November, when Barthélemy came again to ask the Brothers to approve his election at the Chapter of 1717.<sup>68</sup> Zacharie was transferred to Saint Yon shortly thereafter, because he was there, as dining room attendant and infirmarian, when he signed the community document affirming the ownership of Saint Yon on 3 June 1718.<sup>69</sup>

Again in Saint Yon, on 14 August 1725, Zacharie was one of those who signed the agreement for the transfer to Saint Yon of the ownership of the properties of Saint-Denis and Paris.<sup>70</sup> That same year, on 8 September 1725, he renewed his vows according to the Bull of Approbation.<sup>71</sup> No doubt he remained at Saint Yon until his death five years later.

## Brother Benoît

Brother Benoît (Robert Esbrayat) presumably attended the Brothers' school in Mende from the age of ten to fourteen.<sup>72</sup> He applied for membership in the Institute and was called "the young Brother" (*le petit frère*) by De La Salle in his letter to Brother Joseph, Visitor, in 1711. In that letter, Joseph is asked to send Robert (the future Brother Benoît), without benefit of robe, to live in the Brothers' community in Reims, where he is to teach one of the classes.<sup>73</sup> Félix-Paul describes Robert as the first missionary vocation, because Mende was Protestant country and the Brothers were brought there to help in bringing the Protestants back to the Church.<sup>74</sup>

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67. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

68. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

69. Ibid., p. 417.

70. Ibid., 2, p. 113.

71. Ibid., p. 116.

72. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 50; Poutet, *Le XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 1, p. 188.

73. *Letters*, 54.3; Poutet, *Le XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle et les Origines Lasalliennes*, 1, p. 188, note 14.

74. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 231.

In his letter to Brother Joseph, De La Salle wrote:

I am having Brother Fabien set out with the young Brother from Mende who is to take Brother Placide's place [in Reims]. In two or three years he [the young Brother] will be better able to profit from the novitiate than he is at present, and [meanwhile] he will become a capable teacher.<sup>75</sup>

That assignment was only from February to September 1711, because De La Salle changed his mind about Robert's readiness for the novitiate and sent him there to take the robe on 15 September 1711.<sup>76</sup>

Brother Benoît was in Paris in 1714, because this is what Brother Barthélemy states in his letter to M. Martinot in Mende about the community of Brothers there. Brother Henri, Director of Mende, had been accused of causing a letter to be written to Brother Benoît's mother to discourage her son's continuing as a Brother.<sup>77</sup>

In 1717 Benoît was in Laon, and he signed the document of agreement for the Assembly when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there on 4 March.

In 1728 Brother Benoît took perpetual vows at Saint Yon; he attended the Chapter of 1734 as a professed Brother.<sup>78</sup>

In 1744 he was the Director of the community in Dieppe and was asked by Timothée to go to Boulogne in order to set up a school of commerce in that city at the request of the city officials.<sup>79</sup> Lucard gives some details of this school, which was operated by the Brothers of the community of Boulogne.<sup>80</sup> It was not a free school and was under the sponsorship of the town. The mayor or town council had to give each student permission to attend; most of them came from prominent families in Boulogne. The tuition was thirty livres annually—or three livres, ten sous monthly—collected by the town, not by the Brothers, and the town had provision for a limited number of scholarships for those who could not pay. The class was limited to a total of thirty-five students. The subjects were writing, French composition, arithmetic, accounting, foreign exchange, hydrography, and drafting, or design. Boulogne was a port city, as was Dieppe, which may account for Benoît's being asked to set up the program.

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75. *Letters*, 54.3.

76. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 50.

77. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, vol. 1, p. 314.

78. *Letters*, p. 164.

79. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 240.

80. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, vol. 2, p. 140.

It is not clear whether Benoît conducted the school or only set it up because of his experience in Dieppe. He attended the General Chapter of 1745 as Director of Dieppe,<sup>81</sup> and he died in that town in 1750, at the age of fifty-four, after a very interesting career.

## Brother Étienne

In 1716 Brother Étienne (Jean Perotin) was a teacher at Saint Yon, one of the six Brothers assembled by De La Salle on 4 December to commission Brother Barthélemy to visit all the communities, asking all the Brothers to agree to a General Assembly.<sup>82</sup> When Barthélemy made his visit to Saint Yon in May 1717, Étienne was one of that community to sign the agreement for the Assembly.<sup>83</sup>

In 1720 he may have been the Director of the community in Chartres, for he was one of the Brothers to sign the burial certificate of Barthélemy on 9 June. It was as Director of Chartres that he attended the Chapter of 1725 for the reception of the Bull of Approbation, joining the other capitulants after the Chapter in the renewal of vows according to the Bull.<sup>84</sup>

Around 1731 he was cured of an ulcer on his nose, a cure which he attributed to the Founder, according to written testimony he signed on 20 November 1742.<sup>85</sup> At the Chapter of 1734, he was elected as the Second Assistant to the Superior, replacing Brother Dosithée, who retired because of failing eyesight.<sup>86</sup>

In October of 1736, Étienne received in the name of the Institute an endowment of 6,000 livres for two Brothers to teach in a school in Cherbourg.<sup>87</sup> In 1737 he represented the Superior in Avignon at the vow ceremony of five Brothers who made perpetual vows.<sup>88</sup>

At the Chapter of 1745, Étienne was elected the First Assistant; he was sixty-three years of age; the following year he was forced to resign because of poor health. He died in Reims on 4 October 1752.<sup>89</sup>

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81. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 299.

82. *Ibid.*, 1, p. 406.

83. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 187.

84. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 108.

85. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 230.

86. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 149–150.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 318.

## Brothers Who Entered from 1713 through 1715

Name	Diocese	Born	Entered	Died
Cyprien (François Veni)	Maurienne	1688	1713	?
Dorotheé (François Bordet)	Autun	1694	1713	?
Cassien (Nicolas Dreux)	Cambrai	1689	1713	?
Fabien (2nd) (Jacques du Bois)	Chartres	1680	1713	1737
Hilarion (2nd) (Jean-Baptiste Tachot)	Autun	1690	1713	1771
Pierre (2nd) (Jean-Fran. de Cierge)	Reims	1685	1713	1729
Onésime (2nd) (Jean Duyeye)	Laon	?	1713	1739
Martinien (3rd) (Joseph Gautier)	Embrun	1692	1713	?
Bernard (3rd) (Jean Dauge)	Lausanne	1697	1713	?
Lazare (2nd) ( ? )	?	?	1713	1720
Saturnin (Nicolas Armand)	Orange	1691	1715	1720
Edmond (Antoine Dupré)	Rouen	1691	1714	1770
Victorin (Jean Potier)	Reims	1700	1714	1746
Irénée (Claude-François du Lac de Montisambert)	Orléans	1691	1714	1747
Nicaise (Pierre Priolet)	Soissons	1688	1715	1757
Placide (2nd) Antoine Lenglace)	Cambrai	1682	1715	1752
Médard (2nd) (Jean-Pierre Baudran)	Bourges	1690	1715	1762
Anselme (2nd) (Nicolas Gérard)	Reims	1698	1715	?
Séverin (2nd) (Claude du Ret)	Liège	1696	1715	?

Six of these nineteen Brothers did not persevere: Cyprien (François Veni), who was dismissed; Dorotheé (François Bordet), who was also dismissed, sometime before 1719, when another Dorotheé entered the Institute; three—Cassien (Nicolas Dreux), Anselme (Nicolas Gérard), and Séverin (Claude du Ret)—about whom nothing further is known, and Bernard Dauge, who left the Institute. His story follows.

### Brother Bernard (3rd)

The first Brother Bernard (Legentil) has been mentioned in the story of Brother Nicolas Vuyart. Gallego identifies this Bernard as the Brother who died in Paris in 1701, as listed in the *Obituary*,<sup>90</sup> and points out that a second Brother Bernard was in Paris on 7 June 1704 as one of the eighteen Brothers indicted by the suit of the writing masters;<sup>91</sup>

90. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 230.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

other lists of these eighteen Brothers also include the name Bernard, though there is no other information presently available about him.

Brother Bernard (Jean Dauge), the third Brother Bernard, was one of the few first De La Salle Brothers who came from outside France. He was born in Fribourg, Switzerland, on 24 June 1697 and entered the Institute in March 1713.<sup>92</sup> He was in Grenoble when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there in January 1717,<sup>93</sup> and he is the Brother who was asked by Brother Timothée, Superior, to write a biography of De La Salle.

Only the first part of his work is extant,<sup>94</sup> and it is not certain if he ever completed any more of his plan for a full life of the Founder; the first two of four parts which he had projected for the work have survived in eighty-seven manuscript pages. What he has written, however, has great value, for it provides many facts about the early life of the Founder with the Brothers, based on notes which the Brothers provided to Bernard and especially on De La Salle's memoir on the beginnings of the Institute.<sup>95</sup> All this was helpful to the other contemporary biographers, but his own writing is very simple in its style, the work of someone who was not adequately educated for the task.

It seems clear from what he himself wrote that he was aware of his limitations:

As soon as it was decided to entrust to me the composing of a Life of M. de La Salle, I felt deep anxiety, fearing the reproaches and the criticism which would arise here and there.

My fear was not unfounded, for I have already experienced what I so greatly dreaded. What added to my fear was that I did not think that I could succeed in such a task, not only because of my incapacity but because of the little time I knew I would have to devote to an undertaking which would demand much time. . . .

First, they gave me a large number of memorials which I read and reread attentively, but what pleased me most was a rather long manuscript written by M. de La Salle himself, containing an account of the beginnings of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. From these documents I gathered everything which I have set down in the second book. . . .

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92. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 55.

93. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

94. Bernard, Cahiers lasalliens 4; *John Baptist de La Salle: Two Early Biographies*.

95. Cahiers lasalliens 4, p. 22; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 284; Cahiers lasalliens 10, pp. 105–109.

. . . I wrote to Reims to his [the Founder's] brother [Louis de La Salle] and to M. Jean François [Maillefer], his nephew; the latter sent me a memorial containing a few details about the piety manifested by M. de La Salle in his earliest years. . . .<sup>96</sup>

Bernard goes on to say that he wrote and obtained information both from the Sisters who conducted the orphanage for which De La Salle obtained letters patent and from M. Leschassier, Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. Bernard also sent a copy of the first two chapters to Louis de La Salle for his criticism but received no answer for six months. During that time, he revised what he had written, "speaking in my own style and not in that of others." Having spent eighteen months on this revision, he wrote, "I would have finished it sooner had I more time, for I was able to devote only two hours a day to this often-interrupted project."

Bernard also had M. Guyart read the manuscript. This priest, a friend of De La Salle, felt that De La Salle's loyalty to the pope should be stated more simply, which Bernard tried to do. The biographer concludes:

As for other faults, they can easily be corrected once M. [Louis] de La Salle has made his own remarks. It would be useless to do this earlier.

This is what I thought I should say before my work is put into the hands of Canon de La Salle, and I hope that he will read it attentively.<sup>97</sup>

Hemans writes, "If Bernard deserves praise on any one point, we gladly give it to him for the title that he assigned to his work: *The Admirable Guidance Shown by Divine Providence in the Person of the Venerable Servant of God, John Baptist de La Salle*. This is an accurate description of the entire life of the Founder." In his edition of Bernard's biography of De La Salle,<sup>98</sup> Hemans gives a detailed analysis of Bernard's work.

Concerning Bernard himself, there is a note about him on the back of a letter that Brother Joseph received from De La Salle, dated 6 February and assigned to 1711 in the critical edition of the *Letters*. It is not clear by whom or to whom the note was written, unless by Joseph for his own personal record:

96. Cahiers lasalliens 4, pp. 102–103; *Two Early Biographies*, pp. 337–338.

97. Cahiers lasalliens 4, pp. 102–103; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 339.

98. Cahiers lasalliens 4.

As for Brother Bernard, he acts only by impulse. I have no control over him, and nothing that is said to him makes any impression on him. He goes out alone when he feels like it, does all he wants, and acts more authoritatively than a Brother Director. It is said that he intends to return to Paris soon. Consider, my dear Brother, how difficult it is to run schools with such absences. I have never seen in our Brothers what I see in this Brother. Our Brothers have always observed the Rule and observed it in quite a different way before Brother Bernard disturbed everything because of his stubbornness.<sup>99</sup>

Small wonder that the *Catalogue* indicates that Bernard left the Institute; it was sometime after 16 June 1726, when his name is listed as having made perpetual vows at Saint Yon.<sup>100</sup>

It is appropriate to conclude this story of Brother Bernard on a positive note with a passage attributed to him by Canon Blain, which the editors of *Cahiers lasalliens 4* suggest may reflect something favorable about Bernard himself.<sup>101</sup>

He [De La Salle] tenderly loved all the Brothers and showed more affection for those who appeared less pleasing. He was always ready to listen to them in order to give them the advice they needed and to comfort them in their difficulties. Even his most pressing responsibilities did not deter him from giving them this attention.

Also, this great goodness had excellent results, for it was enough for those who were thinking about abandoning their vocation to have heard his gentle and winning words to enter into themselves and then move forward with great steps on the road to holiness. The tenderness he had for them, however, was not inappropriate, which is unusual, since it is easy to go to excess in this matter and to become careless with a tenderness which does not deserve the name, which a true love would not grant or approve, and which, in fact, deserves to be censured.<sup>102</sup>

From the group of 1713, 1714, and 1715, there are three others about whom little is known. Though they were Brothers for more than forty years, practically nothing is known about the lives of

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99. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 227; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 341.

100. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 116.

101. *Cahiers lasalliens 4*, p. 104.

102. Blain, vol. 2, book 4, chap. 3, *Cahiers lasalliens 8*, p. 375.

Nicaise Priolet and Médard Baudran except the data in the *Catalogue*. Not even the date or place of death is known about Martinien Gautier.

The story of the Brothers named Martinien deserves some mention. The first Martinien (family name not known) is mentioned as “a regular chatterbox” in a letter from De La Salle to Brother Paulin around 1705.<sup>103</sup> He was one of five Brothers to form the original community in Rouen at that time, but no other fact is known about him. The second Martinien (Jean-Alexandre Lebreton) entered in 1711, left before 1713, then entered a second time in 1717, was given the name Gérard, and left a second time shortly afterward.

A fourth Martinien (Dupont), who will be mentioned later in the story about Brother Irénée, entered the Institute in 1723; Martinien Gautier had died on 10 February 1723, according to the records of Laon; the fourth Martinien persevered for thirty-seven years. Martinien must have been one of the most popular names, at least to those who were assigning them.

Returning to the group of 1713, 1714, and 1715, there are eleven Brothers in these three years about whom more can be told.

## Brother Fabien (2nd)

Brother Fabien (Jacques du Bois) was born in Chartres on 1 October 1680 and entered the Institute on 25 September 1713; he died at Saint Yon on 6 January 1737.<sup>104</sup> He was in the community of Calais when Barthélemy visited there in March 1717<sup>105</sup> and was probably in Saint Yon the following year, because on 26 June 1718, with others of that community, he signed as cook on a document authorizing Barthélemy, the Superior, and Jean Jacquot, one of the Assistants, to enter into agreement with M. Charon to send Brothers to Canada.<sup>106</sup> This project will be described in the story about Brother Barthélemy. Fabien made perpetual vows at Saint Yon on 8 September 1727.<sup>107</sup>

The earlier Brother Fabien is known only from a letter that De La Salle wrote to Brother Joseph, Visitor,<sup>108</sup> and from the *Obituary*, which lists a Brother Fabien as having died in 1711 in Paris.

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103. *Letters*, 36.7.

104. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 52.

105. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 408.

106. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 203.

107. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 228.

108. *Letters*, 54.3.

## Brother Hilarion (2nd)

The first Brother Hilarion was the father of the four Sceillier brothers, all of whom joined the Institute during the second generation and whose stories have been told with that of the oldest son, Brother Théodore.

This second Brother Hilarion (Jean-Baptiste Tachot) was born in the town of Beaune, diocese of Autun, on 27 March 1690 and entered the Institute on 29 September 1713; the *Catalogue* makes no mention of vows, only that he died in Avignon in August 1771 at the age of eighty-one.<sup>109</sup>

He was in Calais on 17 March 1717,<sup>110</sup> and he is known to have been there in 1720 from the letter of Barthélemy to Anastase, Director of Calais, written on 5 May of that year. Regrettably, Hilarion seems to have been a problem at that time, perhaps unable to control his pupils properly. Barthélemy wrote:

Do not allow Brother Hilarion to go to Holy Mass with the pupils. If you think that this Brother cannot possibly remain in Calais until the vacation period, we must exchange him with a Brother from Boulogne, probably Brother Tite, who is the best behaved of the young Brothers; he does very well in class. This will be hard on our Brothers, but what else can we do?

I am going to write to our dear Brother Rigobert [Director of Boulogne]. If he finds it no great problem, he will carry this out without delay; in that case, I ask you to receive Brother Tite in place of Brother Hilarion and to send Brother Hilarion to Boulogne as a new assignment to replace Brother Tite, with an obedience which you will give him in my name. . . . We will see where it will be best to place Brother Hilarion in Boulogne.<sup>111</sup>

All else that is known of Hilarion is that he died fifty-one years later in Avignon in 1771. He could have given up teaching and become a serving Brother attached to the novitiate house in Avignon. In any case, he was faithful to the end, and like many other Brothers then and now, without much account in the recorded history of his day.

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109. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 52.

110. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 408.

111. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 26.

### Brother Pierre (2nd)

Brother Pierre (Jean-François de Cierge) was born in the town of Romagne, diocese of Reims, on 4 September 1685 and entered the Institute in May 1713.<sup>112</sup> He was in Chartres when Brother Barthélemy visited there in December 1716;<sup>113</sup> he was present at the burial of Barthélemy in June 1720.<sup>114</sup> He attended the General Chapter of 1725 as the Director of the community in Grenoble and made vows according to the Bull after that Chapter.<sup>115</sup> Pierre died in Chartres on 9 September 1729.<sup>116</sup>

### Brother Onésime (2nd)

Brother Onésime (Jean Duyege) was born in the town of Lavaquerresse, diocese of Laon, but the date of his birth is not given; he entered the Institute on 10 October 1713.<sup>117</sup> He was at Saint Yon on 7 May 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there before the General Assembly.<sup>118</sup> He is listed in charge of the storeroom and linen at Saint Yon on the document of June 1718 affirming the ownership of the property after the purchase by Barthélemy and Thomas.<sup>119</sup>

On 16 October 1722, he was one of the cosigners of the purchase of the house on the rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs which was to become the residence for the Brothers who were teaching in the parish of Saint Sulpice.<sup>120</sup> Later this property and others at Saint-Denis were transferred to Saint Yon, and again Onésime is a cosigner of the document.<sup>121</sup> He made vows according to the Bull of Approbation at Saint Yon on 8 September 1725<sup>122</sup> and died at Saint Yon on Christmas Eve 1739.<sup>123</sup>

The story of the first Brother Onésime was told at the end of chapter four.

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112. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 52.

113. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

114. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 38.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

116. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 52.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

118. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 187.

119. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 417.

120. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 56.

121. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

## Brother Lazare (2nd) and Brother Saturnin

Brother Lazare is listed in the *Catalogue* without any of the usual data about his life.<sup>124</sup> Gallego thinks he may have been one of Brother Timothée's novices in Marseille in 1713.<sup>125</sup> His name is placed out of chronological order in the *Catalogue* along with others from the south of France; it is among those who entered in 1715 but placed between one who entered in 1711 and another in 1713. He undoubtedly is the Brother Lazare who was Director of Marseille, and he was present with Brother Saturnin in January 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there.<sup>126</sup>

Aroz<sup>127</sup> reads the signature on the document of Barthélemy's visit to be Mathurin, not Saturnin, but Gallego had an expert identify the signature as the same as the one on the vow formula of Brother Saturnin.<sup>128</sup>

Brother Lazare was not able to attend the Assembly of 1717, perhaps because of the distance he would have to travel or the fact that he could not leave Saturnin alone to run the school.

Brother Saturnin (Nicolas Armand) was born in Sérignan, not far from Avignon in the diocese of Orange, on 31 October 1691 and entered the Institute on 22 April 1715.<sup>129</sup> The *Catalogue* lists him as having left the Institute, but Gallego thinks that this is an error, because of confusion in keeping the *Catalogue* regarding some of the Brothers who entered during this period, especially from the south of France.<sup>130</sup> The data for several of these Brothers may have been kept in the novitiate in Marseille or in Avignon, in both cases under the direction of Brother Timothée. It will be noted that in 1714 De La Salle sent Irénée to Avignon for a few months' training under Timothée.

Rigault tells the strange story about the death of Lazare and of Saturnin while they were caring for the sick in the epidemic imported by ship to Marseille in 1720. Brother Saturnin was the first to be afflicted with the disease and appeared to have succumbed; Lazare wrote

122. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

123. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 53.

124. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

125. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 543.

126. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 185.

127. In *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1.

128. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 544, note 79.

129. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 55.

130. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 544.

to Saint Yon to announce his death. Imagine the surprise of the Brothers in Saint Yon when shortly afterward they received a letter from Saturnin telling them that he himself had recovered but that Lazare had taken sick and died. It should have been Lazare who came back from death, according to the Gospel, but it was Saturnin who was restored to health and returned to the work of caring for the sick. He did die shortly thereafter.<sup>131</sup>

The first Lazare, the one who came to Chartres in 1705, also died in an epidemic, as mentioned in the story about Brother Jacques Compain in chapter two.

Brother Saturnin's name is on De La Salle's burial certificate in April 1719;<sup>132</sup> he may have spent some time at Saint Yon between the time he was in Marseille in 1717 and his return there in 1719 or 1720.

## Brother Edmond

Brother Edmond (Antoine Dupré) was born in Dieppe, diocese of Rouen, on 20 December 1691 and entered the Institute in April 1714. He took perpetual vows and persevered as a Brother until his death in 1770.<sup>133</sup> He was in Paris in April 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there<sup>134</sup> and again the following November when Barthélemy came to get the approval of the community for his election as Superior.<sup>135</sup>

In 1723 Edmond was sent by Timothée to reopen the school in Mende, which had been closed during the epidemic of 1720–1721.<sup>136</sup> In 1725 he was at the Chapter of 1725 as the former Director of the community in Troyes, and he made vows according to the Bull of Approbation after the Chapter.<sup>137</sup>

In 1727 he was a member of the community in Marseille that presented a petition to the town authorities to be recognized as an official religious community.<sup>138</sup> He seems to have traveled quite a bit in a short period; perhaps this was a sign of his administrative ability.

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131. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 173.

132. Cahiers lasalliens 26, p. 317.

133. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 53.

134. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

135. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

136. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 174.

137. *Ibid.*, p. 108.

138. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

In 1743 Edmond was called upon to open a new school in the city of Montpellier at the request of Bishop Georges-Lazare Berger de Charency.<sup>139</sup> Lucard describes Edmond as an excellent school man, having attended Saint Yon and come under the influence of such great teachers as Brothers Ambroise and Dosithée.<sup>140</sup>

Actually three schools were involved in Montpellier, each with two Brothers: one for the parish of Saint Pierre, one for the parish of Notre Dame, and one called Propagation of the Faith, which was established for youngsters newly converted to Catholicism. There was also a provision for boarders and a curriculum adapted to the needs of a commercial center.

Brother Edmond died in Maréville in 1770; he was seventy-eight years old and had been a Brother for fifty-six years.

## Brother Victorin

Brother Victorin (Jean Potier) was born in the town of Romagne, diocese of Reims. He entered the Institute at the age of fourteen on 23 November 1714 and stayed in the novitiate until 21 May 1715.<sup>141</sup> He was in the Paris community on 25 April 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there.<sup>142</sup> He was also in Paris when Barthélemy made subsequent visits to the community—on 11 November 1717 to ask the Brothers to approve his election as Superior and on 21 July 1718 for a routine visit.<sup>143</sup>

Brother Victorin was a capitulant at the General Chapter of 1725 and made vows with the capitulants in accordance with the Bull of Approbation. He also attended the Chapter of 1734. He died at Fontainebleau on 2 October 1746; nothing more about the last twenty years of his life is currently available.

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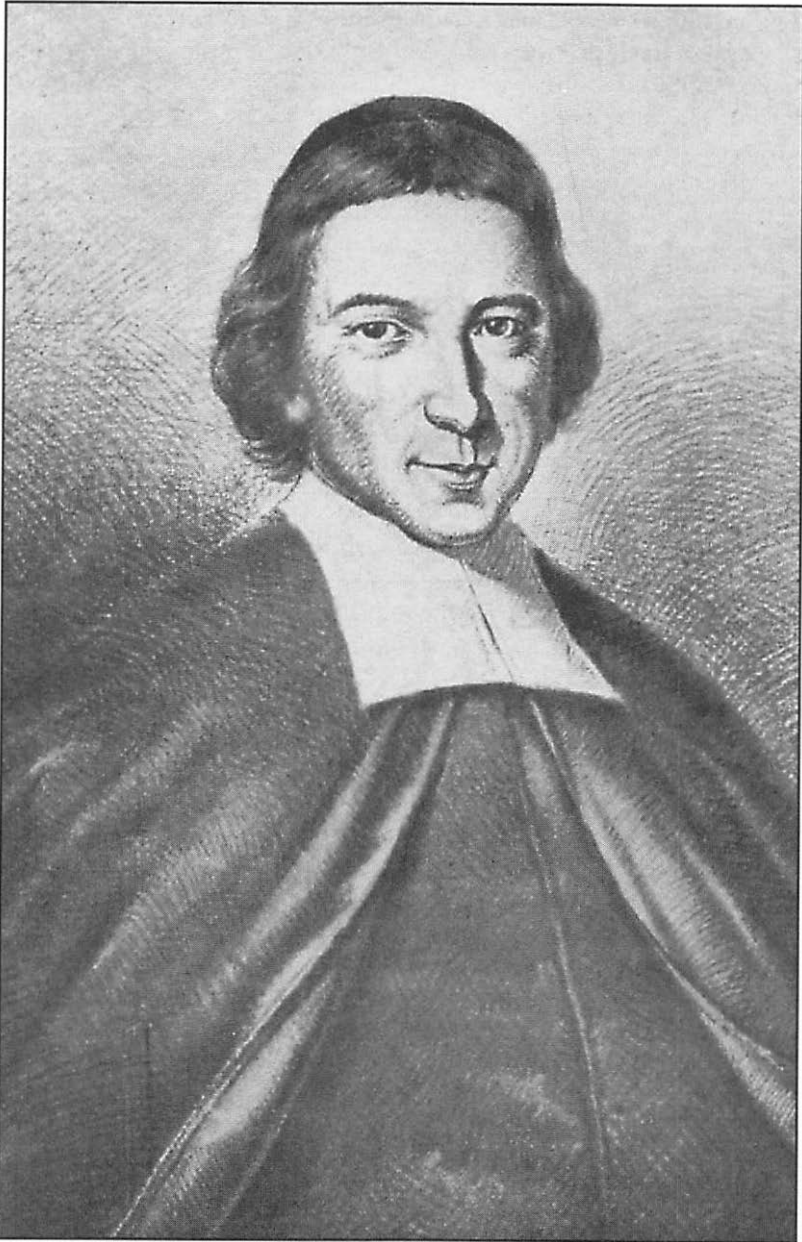
139. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

140. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 127.

141. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 51.

142. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

143. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413; 2, p. 12.



Brother Irénée, Claude-François du Lac de Montisambert (1691–1747), Director of Novices at Saint Yon and Assistant to the Superior General. *Reproduction of the frontispiece, Vie du Frère Irénée (Paris: Procure Générale, 1930).*



Brother Irénée, Claude-François du Lac de Montisambert (1691–1747), Director of Novices at Saint Yon and Assistant to the Superior General. *Reproduction of the frontispiece, Vie du Frère Irénée (Paris: Procure Générale, 1930).*

## Brother Irénée

Brother Irénée (Claude-François du Lac de Montisambert) was born in Tigy, diocese of Orléans, on 30 October 1691 and entered the Institute on or around 6 May 1714.<sup>144</sup> A biography of Brother Irénée by Bertrand de La Tour, a doctor of the Sorbonne, was published in 1774; a version of this biography was published in 1930,<sup>145</sup> from which most of this present story is taken.

The Du Lac family belonged to the nobility of the sword; his father, an ardent soldier of considerable wealth, “looked upon military service as the eighth sacrament, equal in honor to the priesthood and the nobility of the robe.” Thus Claude, in 1705 at the age of fourteen, became a lieutenant in the regiment of Sainte Menehould, following the example of his older brother, a captain in the Royal-Champagne regiment.

The future Brother Irénée spent two unsuccessful periods in the army. The first was interrupted by his wild living, his gambling, and his father’s request to the commander of the regiment that his son be decommissioned. The young man was idle until his father bought him the rank of lieutenant in the Royal-Champagne regiment for his second period as a soldier; this started out much like the first, until he became ill and heavily in debt. Again, after the pleading of his mother and sister, the father paid for his debts, and the young man recovered his health. He returned to active service, was wounded in battle when a bullet pierced him, and was thought dead, but no vital organ was injured, and he survived. That was in 1709, when Claude was seventeen or eighteen years old.

His convalescence was a time of conversion from his former way of life. When he returned to the ranks, he was a model officer for four years. The hand of Providence became even more evident to him when, during a desperate siege of an important town in the year 1713, a superior officer ordered him to pull back and told him that his daring was not courage but foolhardiness. He had no sooner obeyed the order than another soldier, who had rushed ahead, was killed by a cannon ball. Claude visited a monastery that evening, and while praying in the chapel, he became convinced that God wanted him to leave the military and become a religious. He made a pilgrimage to Rome and Loreto to seek light and strength to follow this inspiration.

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144. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 54.

145. *Vie du Frère Irénée*, Paris: Procure générale, 1930.

Two attempts to carry out his resolution—one with the Capuchins of Grenoble, the other with the Carthusians nearby—were defeated by the refusal of his father to give permission and by his own lack of education, especially in Latin. A priest of Grenoble, M. Jean de Saléon, who knew De La Salle, recommended that Claude consider becoming a Brother. He was introduced to De La Salle at the retreat center of Paménie. After spending time with De La Salle, Claude joined the community of Grenoble in April 1714. The Director, Brother Jean Jacquot, introduced him to the rules of community life. After a month he was given the robe and the name Brother Irénée. He was only twenty-two years old.

Fifteen days later, Irénée was sent to Avignon to be with Brother Timothée, who had previously been Director of Novices briefly in Marseille. In September De La Salle called Irénée to Paris to be with Brother Barthélemy in the novitiate. After a short while he was sent to Laon to try his hand at teaching. He was not successful; he was too easy on the pupils; he found it more difficult to teach a class of youngsters than to be in charge of a regiment. It was at this time, probably in 1716, that the Founder wrote him a letter in response to one which Irénée had written to him:

When you are beset with impure thoughts, if you are in class, try to occupy yourself with the work you have on hand.

Such thoughts as these are the most subtle temptations of the devil, and you must keep your mind on the present and not worry about the future. This idea of returning to the world to devote yourself to good works has been the downfall of many religious.

You will find penance a great help in correcting your defects and advancing in virtue.

Whatever your dispositions, you must strive to bring your will to accept reprimands and corrections. If you have difficulty in accepting them in your heart, at least say that you accept them.

Do not upset yourself trying to make acts of penance frequently; that could injure your health. It is enough simply to direct your thoughts to God from time to time.

Why are you afraid of the days set aside for confession? Instead, you should look forward to them.

Don't talk a great deal in class. Get in the habit of using the usual signal as is our custom.

When you feel tempted to give way to impatience, hold yourself in check and do nothing until the impulse has passed.

I am devotedly yours in Our Lord. . . .<sup>146</sup>

The biography of Brother Irénée indicates that one temptation Irénée experienced was occasioned by one of his pupils who looked like a girl whom he loved before he became a Brother.

In March 1717, Irénée was part of the Laon community when Brother Barthélemy visited there.<sup>147</sup> De La Salle recalled Irénée to Paris sometime after that, possibly because of Irénée's lack of success in school, and sent him to Saint Yon to assist Brother Barthélemy in the novitiate.

In De La Salle's last letter to Brother Gabriel in Rome, dated 5 December 1716, the Founder says:

I was hoping to send you, during the holidays, a Brother who has been in Rome, knows a little of the Italian language, and is a prudent man and a good teacher. But we have employed him elsewhere in the belief that his usefulness in that position would be a matter of great importance.<sup>148</sup>

It may be that De La Salle had these thoughts during the summer, when it was still unclear that Irénée was not that good a teacher; otherwise, his description of this Brother was probably true of Irénée.

There are copies of two vow formulas made by Brother Irénée in *Livret des Premiers Vœux*, one for three years made on 25 September 1716, the other for perpetual vows made on 29 September 1717. On the back of the latter, in his own handwriting, is an explanation of the obligations of the vows of obedience, stability, and association to keep gratuitous schools, probably an outline of his conferences to the novices, as well as a conscientious list of his own understanding of his obligations.<sup>149</sup>

After Brother Barthélemy was elected Superior in May 1717, Brother Irénée became the Director of Novices. A letter of the Founder to Barthélemy, probably in early 1718, sheds some light on the initial efforts of Irénée as Director of Novices:

I am writing to you, my very dear Brother, because I am astounded to see the sorry state of your novitiate: the two or three

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146. *Letters*, 119.

147. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 186.

148. *Letters*, 32.9.

149. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, pp. 20–21.

novices are receiving no formation at all and observe the rules no better than they did when they first entered the house.

Moreover, there are five aspirants who are full of defects and who see almost no good example.

The new master of novices, having received no training for his work, scarcely knows what he should do or what the novices should do. He says he has no rule to follow, and neither do the novices.

I do not think that I have seen, at least for a good many years, a novitiate like this in the Community, and yet, with such a situation, you hope to establish new foundations!

. . . . There are even complaints that the novices at Rouen do not show much evidence of the spirit of their state and pay no attention to detail.

I beg you, take steps to remedy such a situation as soon as possible, for you know that the strength of the Institute depends on the formation of the novices in fidelity to the Rule. . . .<sup>150</sup>

De La Salle wrote this after the election of Barthélemy, when the Founder had given up his role as Superior. De La Salle may have given up the role of Superior, but he certainly had not relinquished his responsibility for the good of the Institute. The stories of these novices will be told with those who entered in 1717.

Once Irénée learned his job well, he became a powerful influence at Saint Yon, not only on the novices but also on the operation of the junior novitiate and even on the detention center for adults. His piety led him to establish for these adults the Sodality of Our Lady, for which he secured approval from Rome; it was a mark of his great devotion to the Mother of God.

Some examples of the notes made by Irénée about his novices have been preserved. One of them concerns the fourth Brother Martinien, to whom reference has been made:

Nicolas Dupont, named Brother Martinien. Since 27 February 1723, when he entered the Society, until the end of May—his defects: he has little intelligence and has not been at all open; he is dull; he inclines toward sadness rather than joy. His good qualities: he has a fairly good memory. He entered with good intentions, seeking only to work out his salvation. He has a lot of

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150. *Letters*, 126.1–6.

docility, submission, and a great indifference regarding anything that you want him to do. He is very humble, mortified, self-controlled, recollected, devout, faithful to the rules, simple, tractable; he gives an account of his conscience with simplicity, and he has a good disposition for the interior life. He has made about three months of the novitiate.<sup>151</sup>

Eventually Martinien made perpetual vows; he worked for thirty-seven years as a Brother, dying in Vannes in March 1760. He is listed as Director of Junior Novices on a contract at Saint Yon in 1728.

Another such account by Irénée reads as follows:

François Genard, named Brother Raymond. From the time he entered on 14 April 1723 up to the end of May, he has almost always been indisposed, particularly with headaches which result from his excessive concentration; he is extremely scrupulous, a result of his excessive fear of offending God.

This fear holds him in such a mental block that it deprives him of freedom to do what he ought. This is especially the case regarding his studies. His good qualities: in his scruples he has much submission and docility. He has much piety, devotion, fear of God—even too much. He has a love for obedience and fidelity to the rules. He has such humble thoughts about himself that he goes to extremes. He is quite detached from his relatives and the things of this world, loving poverty and mortification. He is timid and fearful, resulting from the great fear he has of God and not from reprimand or penance. This is why his least faults appear to him as mountains and bring him to tears. This is why care must be taken in pointing out his mistakes. June: sent out teaching.

Raymond made perpetual vows, was a Brother for fifty-six years, and died at Saint Yon, at the age of seventy-nine, on 13 September 1779.

Irénée eventually combined the role of Director of the house at Saint Yon with his job as Director of Novices, and he became an important member of the central administration of the Institute.<sup>152</sup> He attended the Chapter of 1720, when Timothée became Superior, and the Chapter of 1725, when the Brothers reelected Timothée and then elected Irénée to be the First Assistant, replacing Brother Jean Jacquot.

In 1727, when Brother Timothée was planning to make a tour of the communities and would pass near Orléans, Irénée begged him to

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151. Cahiers lasalliens 3, pp. 80–81.

152. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, pp. 417–418; 2, pp. 111, 113.

stop at the Du Lac home in Tigy, not far from Orléans, to find out whether some of the debts he had incurred before entering the Institute had been paid by his father. It was a painful matter of conscience, which Timothée obliged. The Superior was willing in this instance to relax the strict regulations about contact with one's family, and he was pleased to find Irénée's mother in good health. Irénée's father had died several years previously, but Madame du Lac assured Timothée that all of Irénée's debts were paid. She also wrote a letter to a friend of the family who lived in Rouen, asking him to visit Irénée at Saint Yon and to send her an assurance of her son's health and happiness.

Timothée again gave evidence of a leniency not strictly Lasallian, when he told Irénée to write his mother three times a year. Among other things, Irénée sent his mother a copy of his vow formula and a portrait of De La Salle. Then in 1733 Timothée sent Irénée, as Brother Assistant, on a visit to all the communities and told him to spend six days with his mother in the course of his journey. This was quite an emotional experience for the mother and her son.

Shortly after that, Irénée's younger brother, Nicolas, became mentally ill, and Irénée was authorized to bring him to Saint Yon for treatment. Happily, this plan was successful, and the young man returned home. After a brief marriage, however, he died prematurely in 1741.

Irénée was reelected First Assistant at the General Chapters of 1734 and 1745; he died at Saint Yon in 1747.

Rigault devotes twenty pages in his history of the Institute to extol the virtues and the influence of Irénée on the spirituality of the Institute. He considers Irénée as one of the great representatives of the nobility of France and of the French School of spirituality of the seventeenth century. Like Irénée, Rigault was a native of Orléans.

As Assistant, Irénée made rounds of visits to all the communities. On these visits his influence on the Brothers was a great inspiration to everyone because of his deep spirituality; most of the Brothers were also his former novices, already indebted to him for their formation in the spirit of the Founder.

From the year 1717, when he became Director of Novices, and throughout his years as Assistant from 1725 to 1747, Brother Irénée was undoubtedly a major factor in the formation of the Brothers. He seems to have combined the role of Director of Novices and Assistant all these years.<sup>153</sup>

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153. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 1, p. 181.

Although it is difficult in a few words to characterize the full impact of his teaching, it is clear that in his work of forming novices and visiting his former novices in community as Assistant, his emphasis was on the interior life more than on the apostolate.

On one occasion he urged Timothée not to increase the number of schools too rapidly, because by multiplying the schools—especially the boarding schools—the Institute was overworking the Brothers, to the detriment of their spiritual and apostolic formation.<sup>154</sup>

An example of his teaching is seen in the following excerpts from a letter he wrote to Brother Stanislas, one of his first novices in 1717, who in 1729 became the first Director of Novices at Avignon. The letter was in response to a request from Stanislas for guidance in his new role as Director of the novitiate:

Take great care to make yourself truly spiritual and interior, to be guided by the spirit of faith, having only God in view in all your conduct. Make yourself an example for your novices in the practice of all the virtues, especially an exact observance of the rules, making all the exercises of the novitiate yourself if possible. . . .

Do not get involved with work foreign to your assignment. Your great obligation is to make yourself very spiritual and interior and to make your very dear novices become very interior. I once asked our dear M. de La Salle if he thought it would be good for me to learn how to shave [the novices?]. He replied with energy, "My Brother, a Director of Novices ought not know how to do anything."

When you receive a postulant, it is important to spend the first fifteen days helping him to make a general confession. Help him by instruction and reading related to this action. Our dear Father did this very usefully. At the start of the novitiate, it is necessary to give the beginners spiritual books on the last ends and horror for sin, in order to inspire the fear of God . . . ; help them acquire an interior spirit, love for prayer, the spirit of faith, observance of the Rule, and love for the maxims of the Gospel. . . .

In general, be on guard against intelligent subjects who have no piety: often there is in them at least a beginning of certain passions or vices which will cause division and trouble in our communities. Subjects who are limited in intelligence, though pious, are no more desirable; they do not understand the extent of their obligations, and they bring discredit on religion. Those who lack

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154. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 158.

judgment are often the cross of their Directors and a plague on communities. . . . The qualities required in aspirants are a good spirit, openness, docility, and an inclination to piety. . . .<sup>155</sup>

As a mitigating balance to this rather strong emphasis on the interior life of the Brother, Irénée wrote to the same Brother on another occasion:

It is necessary, as our dear Father and holy Founder told us, to be firm when speaking to the novices as a group but to be gentle and tender in private conversations. Do not reprimand beginners in public until their dispositions are known and you are sure that they are able to accept humiliation. In their troubles of mind and bodily discomfort, it is necessary to help them, speaking to them often, because ordinarily they do not have the strength to bear with these problems by themselves.

As a mother caresses her child, we must draw them with much kindness, affability, openness, and receive with cordiality those who come to speak to us, in order to win their affection and their confidence, in order to bring them more easily to God; this should be our sole objective.

When we have won them, we can sometimes test them by speaking to them without affection, but this must be done with prudence and not out of moodiness. We must only rarely test timid persons, and with much tact, in order not to lose their confidence and freedom of spirit when they wish to be open with us.<sup>156</sup>

Many of the first Brothers were profoundly imbued with the Founder's spirit of prayer during De La Salle's forty years of labor in creating the Institute; perhaps Brother Irénée did more than anyone else to inculcate that spirit in so many during the thirty years he succeeded the Founder in the role of Director of Novices and Assistant.

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155. *Vie du Frère Irénée*, pp. 128–129.

156. *Ibid.*, pp. 129–130.

## Brother Nicaise

Brother Nicaise (Pierre Priolet) was born in the town of Vandières, diocese of Soissons, on 26 June 1688 and entered the Institute on 13 January 1715. He made perpetual vows, and he died in the community of Maréville on 14 September 1757.<sup>157</sup> All that has been preserved of his forty-two years as a Brother is his presence in the community of Calais on 17 March 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there. Because the Director, Brother Norbert, signed the names of the Brothers for them on the document of that visit, we do not even have Brother Nicaise's signature.<sup>158</sup>

There is a good possibility, though no certainty, that Nicaise was still in Calais in 1720 when Brother Barthélemy wrote to the Director about the transfer of a Brother to Boulogne; this will be discussed in the story of Brother Barthélemy in chapter six.

## Brother Placide (2nd)

Brother Placide (Antoine-Michel Lenglace) was born in the town of Cagnicourt, diocese of Cambrai, on 20 May 1682. He entered the Institute on 15 March 1715 and was sent to Reims on 8 October of the same year.<sup>159</sup> The story of the first Brother Placide (Thomas Guyot), who died in 1714, has already been given. This second Placide was still in Reims when Brother Barthélemy visited there on 28 February 1717.<sup>160</sup> He came to the Chapter of 1725 as a former Director of the community in Reims and signed a copy of the minutes of that Chapter on 12 December 1726.<sup>161</sup> In 1731 he was Director of the community in Avignon, signing a receipt for a piece of property given to the Brothers in that city.<sup>162</sup> Beyond that, there is no further information about him presently available.

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157. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 53.

158. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 546.

159. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 53.

160. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

161. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 108, 113.

162. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 404.

## Brother Médard (2nd)

Brother Médard (Jean-Pierre Baudran) was born in Bourges on 20 March 1690 and entered the Institute on 26 April 1715.<sup>163</sup> There is a record of his having been in Reims in March 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there.<sup>164</sup> He made triennial vows on 21 September 1728<sup>165</sup> and, eventually, perpetual vows before he died in Marseille in 1762,<sup>166</sup> but there is no other record available at this time about his forty-seven years as a Brother.

The first Brother Médard has been mentioned at the end of chapter four in telling the “Additional Stories of Brothers” given by Blain in his supplement to the biography of the Founder.

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163. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 53.

164. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

165. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 185.

166. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 53.

## Brothers Who Entered from 1716 through 1718

Name	Diocese	Born	Entered	Died
Sérapion (2nd) (Nicolas Rivière)	Uzès	1697	1716	?
Spiridion (Louis Pellat)	Grenoble	1692	1716	?
Remi (2nd) (Jacques Harlé)	Boulogne	1699	1716	?
Maurice (3rd) (Jean des Granges)	Laon	1687	1716	?
Arsène (2nd) (Louis Baron)	Chartres	1692	1716	?
Adrien (2nd) (Claude Saffroy)	Paris	1679	1716	?
Joachim (2nd) (François Dromart)	Laon	1681	1716	1736
Denis (2nd) (Louis Ledoux)	Laon	1690	1716	1746
Quentin (3rd) (Jacques Canappe)	Reims	1687	1716	1751
Ignace (Jacques Lecourt)	Reims	1695	1716	?
Tite (Raymond Jaime)	Grenoble	1696	1716	?
Pascal (2nd) (Henri Colart)	Laon	1700	1716	1727
Alexis (2nd) ( ? )	?	?	?	?
Claude (3rd) (Godefroy Alexandre Boucher)	Rouen	1671	1716	?
Marcel (François Perin)	Reims	1695	1717	?
Sixte (Pascal Latruite)	Chalon-sur-Saône	1695	1717	1788
Félicien (Jean-Joseph Armand)	Orange	1704	1717	?
Gérard (2nd) (Jean-Alexandre Lebreton)	?	?	1717	?
Stanislas (2nd) (Albin Boucher)	Reims	1698	1717	1731
Victor (2nd) (Étienne-Nicolas Morel)	Laon	1689	1718	1759
Eusèbe (Pierre Caron)	Noyon	1697	1718	1782
Ildefonse (Claude ? )	?	1697	1718	?
Raymond (Pierre Chanut)	Bayeux	1698	1718	?
Alexandre (2nd) (Alexandre Quesney)	Sens	1685	1718	1746
Xavier (Jean-Louis Dormay)	Laon	1688	1718	?
Albert (2nd) (Louis Frenouillet)	Paris	1685	1718	?
Georges (2nd) (Frédéric David Colier)	Lausanne	1685	1718	?
Sylvestre (François Regnaudin)	Paris	1700	1718	1747

Only one Brother entered in 1719 before the death of De La Salle: a Brother Sylvain (Joseph Ignace Nicolas Langlet), and he left the Institute, then returned in 1733, was given the same name again, and died in the Institute, although the place and the date are not recorded.

On the list of those who entered in the years 1716 through 1718, the large number (eighteen) of question marks in the column for the date of death indicates that many of those who entered during these years did not persevere. In fact, thirteen with these question marks left the Institute, and two others (Ignace and Félicien) were sent away. The other three with question marks (Spiridion, Maurice, and Marcel) are listed as having died (without date), which would indicate that they persevered, though the place of death is not listed. The thirteen who left—about most of whom there are only the simple data of the *Catalogue*—are Sérapion, Remi, Arsène, Adrien, Tite, Alexis, Claude (who was one of the gardeners at Saint Yon in 1718),<sup>167</sup> Gérard (who has been mentioned among those who entered in 1711 and who was given the name Martinien, left, and then reentered in 1717), Ildefonse, Raymond, Xavier, Albert, and Georges.

Five of the fifteen who entered in 1716 were in community when Barthélemy visited all the communities. Alexis is one of these, and he was in two communities during the visitation: in Grenoble during Barthélemy's visit there in January and in Guise during the visit of March 1717.<sup>168</sup> No doubt he was transferred because of some difficulty he was having in school or in community; he is listed in the Paris community when Barthélemy visited there in November 1717. Since the date of his death is not given, he may not have persevered as a Brother. Another Brother Alexis joined in 1729. The other four in community during Barthélemy's visit were Sérapion in Avignon, Remi in Rouen, Alexandre in Alès, and Maurice in Paris.

Five others who entered in 1716 and who persevered are not listed on the documents of the visit, so they were evidently in the novitiate under the direction of Brother Irénée, the Sub-Director, while Barthélemy was away. They are Brothers Spiridion, Joachim, Denis, Quentin, and Pascal, whose stories will be told later.

Two who were novices in 1718—Brother Victor (Étienne-Nicolas Morel) and Brother Alexandre (Alexandre Quesney)—seem to have been placed in community before they entered the novitiate. Their names are listed on the documents made during Barthélemy's visit to the communities in 1717. Victor was in Avignon with Brother Timothée; Alexandre was in Alès with Brother Bernardin. According to Rigault,<sup>169</sup> Albert is said to have been in Guise with Brother Charles, but this is the result of misreading the name Alexis on the document

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167. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 418.

168. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, pp. 186–187.

169. *Ibid.*, 1, p. 408.

of the visit. More will be said later about Victor and Alexandre. Albert is listed as having left the Institute.<sup>170</sup>

### Brother Tite and Brother Claude (3rd)

Of the other five who did not persevere, two were also in the novitiate: Brother Tite (Raymond Jaime) and Brother Claude (Godefroy Alexandre Boucher). Claude is listed as having left in September 1719. Tite deserves special mention from the limited knowledge we have about him. He was born in the town of Saint-Quentin-sur-Isère, diocese of Grenoble, on 6 November 1696 and entered the Institute in September 1716.<sup>171</sup>

Tite was a promising young man, judging from a letter written in 1720 by Brother Barthélemy to Brother Anastase, Director of Calais, for the letter speaks favorably of him.<sup>172</sup> As told in the story about Hilarion, Barthélemy wrote that he would send Tite to replace Brother Hilarion, who needed a change from Calais; he says that Tite is the best behaved of the young Brothers; that he is very humble and obedient, a charmer in the classroom; that he could take any of the classes but preferably not the top or the second one, in order not to inconvenience the Brothers in Calais, and that his change will disappoint the Brothers of his community in Boulogne. Certainly if Tite could continue that performance, he would have done great good in the Institute. There is no known record of the date or the reason for his leaving the Brothers.

### Brother Spiridion

Brother Spiridion (Louis Pellat) was born in the town of Venose, diocese of Grenoble, on 24 March 1692 and entered the Institute in 1716.<sup>173</sup> He took triennial vows on 14 September 1728, apparently because they were required, then made perpetual vows a week later.<sup>174</sup> The *Catalogue* mentions that he died, which is a sign of his perseverance, though there is no date or place given.

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170. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 61.

171. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 58.

172. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 26.

173. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

174. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 184–185.

### Brother Remi (2nd)

Brother Remi (Jacques Harlé) was born in the town of Guémy, diocese of Boulogne, on 9 April 1699 and entered the Institute in 1716,<sup>175</sup> but he left sometime after that.<sup>176</sup>

The first Brother Remi is listed in the records of the community of Rethel in 1706; his family name was Frapant. He is also mentioned in a letter to Brother Joseph, probably when Joseph was Visitor in 1711, but otherwise the first Brother Remi is unknown; he either died or left the Institute before 1714, when the *Catalogue* was started.

### Brother Maurice (3rd)

Brother Maurice (Jean des Granges) was born in the town of Vervins, diocese of Laon, on 17 October 1687 and entered the Institute in May 1716.<sup>177</sup> He was in Reims in April 1717 when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there<sup>178</sup> and in Paris later that year and the following year.<sup>179</sup> He died in Reims, but the date is not known.

The first Brother Maurice was one of the earliest Brothers, whose death has been described in chapter two.

### Brother Joachim (2nd)

Brother Joachim (François Dromart) was also born in Vervins; his birthdate is 18 May 1681, and he entered the Institute on 31 October 1716.<sup>180</sup> He is mentioned in the letter of 5 May 1720 written by Brother Barthélemy to Brother Anastase, Director of Calais. Barthélemy says that Joachim is not able to be transferred at the time; this could mean that he is either in Calais or in Boulogne, the community involved in the transfer being made with a Brother in Calais.

Joachim made vows according to the Bull of Approbation on 2 September 1725 with the community of Saint Yon.<sup>181</sup> He died at Saint

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175. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

176. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 56.

177. Ibid.

178. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 186.

179. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413; 2, p. 12.

180. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 57.

Yon in 1736.<sup>182</sup> This study has been unable to find any other information about him. The first Brother Joachim has been mentioned among those who entered in 1704.

## Brother Denis (2nd)

Brother Denis (Louis Ledoux) was born in the town of Erloy, diocese of Laon, on 25 August 1690 and entered the Institute in March 1716.<sup>183</sup> The story of the first Brother Denis has been told with those who entered before 1700.

Brother Denis Ledoux was sent from the novitiate to the community in Paris to assist in the opening of the new school in Les Invalides in November 1717. He is registered with the Paris community when Brother Barthélemy visited there to secure the approval of the Brothers for his election as Superior.<sup>184</sup>

Brother Denis was at the Chapter of 1725 as Director of the community in Boulogne, and at that time he made his vows according to the Bull.<sup>185</sup> He became Visitor of the communities of the south of France sometime before 1729, when his name appears on the vow formulas of the Brothers who made vows in the novitiate at Avignon.<sup>186</sup> He also attended the Chapter of 1734.

In May 1737 Brother Timothée sent Denis to Canada with a Brother Pacifique, in order to negotiate preliminary arrangements for the Brothers to take over the hospice and schools which the Brothers founded by M. Charon were conducting in Montreal under the sponsorship of the Sulpicians.<sup>187</sup> These arrangements were signed in September 1737 by five Charon Brothers and the two Brothers of the Christian Schools. Denis then returned to France in October, while Pacifique remained in Montreal until March 1738.

Brother Timothée decided to cancel the project; the Charon Brothers had accumulated considerable debts, which the creditors would have applied to the Institute on the basis of the agreement between the two groups. It was also clear that the Sulpicians were not

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181. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 116.

182. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 57.

183. Ibid.

184. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

185. Ibid., 2, p. 108.

186. Ibid., p. 185.

187. Cahiers lasalliens 48, pp. 350ff.

disposed to turn over the management of their foundation in Montreal to the Institute. Brother Pacifique was recalled and assigned to Paris, but he continued his interest in the Canadian project. According to Brother Gilles Beaudet,<sup>188</sup> Timothée and Pacifique continued their efforts to revive the contract with the Charon Brothers in Montreal but without success.

Pacifique was sent to Italy around 1714 to replace Brother Sylvestre, and his name is on the register of the General Chapter of 1745 that is preserved in the Generalate Archives. Denis was Director of the community in Rennes in 1746, and in that capacity he signed an agreement on behalf of the Institute to provide three Brothers for a school in Saint-Brieuc.<sup>189</sup> He died that year in Brittany, probably in the community of Rennes.<sup>190</sup>

### Brother Quentin (3rd)

Brother Quentin (Jacques Canappe) was born in Begny, diocese of Reims, on 11 May 1687 and entered the Institute on 8 October 1716.<sup>191</sup>

The first Brother Quentin died in the epidemic of the purple fever in Chartres in 1707 at the age of thirty-two,<sup>192</sup> which has been mentioned in the story about Jacques Compain.

The second Brother Quentin was in the Chartres community with Brother Hubert as Director in 1710 and has been described in the story about Hubert.

Brother Quentin Canappe was one of the fourteen Brothers at Saint Yon who signed a document asserting the ownership of Saint Yon on 3 June 1718,<sup>193</sup> and he is listed as the Director of Troyes in attendance at the General Chapter of 1725, after which he made perpetual vows according to the Bull of Approbation,<sup>194</sup> and he signed a copy of the minutes of that Chapter on 14 December 1726.<sup>195</sup>

Quentin died at Mazères in 1751, but nothing further is available in the records about the last twenty-five years of his life as a Brother.

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188. Montreal District *Bulletin*, 1977.

189. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 255.

190. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 57.

191. Ibid.

192. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 216.

193. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 418.

194. Ibid., 2, p. 108.

195. Ibid., p. 113.

## Brother Pascal (2nd)

Brother Pascal (Henri Colart) was born in Laon on 1 August 1700 and entered the Institute in March 1716.<sup>196</sup> He was sent to Paris in November 1717 with Brother Denis Ledoux to open the new school in Les Invalides.<sup>197</sup> He died in Calais in 1727.

The first Brother Pascal entered in 1711 and died in Paris before 1716; he has been mentioned in the story of his brother, Brother Roch, who entered in 1709.

## Brother Marcel

Brother Marcel (François Perin) was born in the town of Ardeuil, diocese of Reims, on 14 January 1695 and entered the Institute on 7 June 1717.<sup>198</sup> He was one of five novices who entered in 1717, only three of whom persevered; Marcel was one of the three. Mention has been made in the story about Brother Irénée of De La Salle's letter of complaint to Brother Barthélemy concerning the lack of discipline among these novices, who were under the direction of the new Director, Brother Irénée.<sup>199</sup>

The only record of Marcel's work in school is in a letter of Brother Barthélemy to the Director of Calais in 1720, in which Barthélemy advises the Director to leave Marcel with the second class because he dislikes teaching the youngest children; Barthélemy adds that when school is over, they will discuss what to do with Marcel.<sup>200</sup> Brother Marcel may not have been well; he died in Saint Yon, though the date is not given.<sup>201</sup>

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196. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 58.

197. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

198. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 59.

199. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 246.

200. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 26.

201. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 59.

## Brother Sixte

Brother Sixte (Pascal Latruiette) was born in Sennecey, diocese of Chalon-sur-Saône, on 6 October 1695 and entered the Institute on 2 June 1717; he died in Marseille seventy-one years later, on 11 May 1788, the last surviving Brother who knew De La Salle personally.<sup>202</sup>

Sixte was in Saint Yon in 1718 and signed as one of the community attesting to the purchase of the property for the Brothers.<sup>203</sup> In the course of his long years as a Brother, he attended the Chapter of 1725 as the Director of Reims and subsequent Chapters up to 1771, which was a provincial chapter set up by the Superior, Brother Florence, in Avignon.<sup>204</sup> Previously, in 1758, Sixte had signed on behalf of the Institute for the purchase of property near Avignon.<sup>205</sup>

Regrettably, there is no description of the personality of Brother Sixte to match the many years of his service to the Institute for most of the eighteenth century, up to the eve of the French Revolution. He must have been a great symbol for all the Brothers as one who knew De La Salle from personal experience during the last two years of the Founder's life.

## Brother Stanislas (2nd)

Brother Stanislas (Albin Boucher) was born in Charleville, diocese of Reims, on 15 February 1698 and entered the Institute on 14 September 1717.<sup>206</sup>

The first Stanislas has been mentioned among those who entered in 1711; he died in August 1717; Albin Boucher entered and took that name in September.

Brother Stanislas Boucher is one of the Brothers about whom Canon Blain wrote a summary life in his supplement to the biography of De La Salle.<sup>207</sup> Blain no doubt knew Stanislas from personal experience at Saint Yon, and he writes at length about the virtues of this Brother. As a novice Stanislas seemed to have none of the ordinary

202. *Ibid.*; Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 293.

203. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 418.

204. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 348.

205. *Ibid.*, p. 386.

206. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 59.

207. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 85–95.

weaknesses of young people; virtue was second nature to him. He did not walk, says Blain, but flew on the path of perfection in the practice of prayer, humility, mortification, and all the other virtues of the Christian life. After the novitiate, his pursuit of virtue went on relentlessly, despite severe attacks of colitis which racked him with spasms and intense pain.

He was at Saint Yon on 3 June 1718 when the fourteen Brothers of that community signed a document attesting to the purchase of the property.<sup>208</sup> He was in Marseille in 1727 when the twelve Brothers there petitioned the municipality for recognition as a religious congregation.<sup>209</sup> In 1728 he was in Avignon to make his vows according to the Bull of Approbation; curiously he was one of those who made their triennial vows on 14 September and then perpetual vows on 21 September, apparently in order to conform to some regulation that the triennial vows had to precede the perpetual ones.<sup>210</sup>

In 1729 Stanislas was appointed to be the first Director of Novices for the new novitiate in Avignon. Excerpts from a letter written by Brother Irénée to Brother Stanislas concerning his work in the novitiate have been included in the story of Brother Irénée. These excerpts indicate the emphasis that both men gave to the training of the novices.

The painful colitis suffered by Stanislas forced his retirement from the novitiate, probably within less than two years, and he was appointed Visitor to the communities in the south, in the hope that this assignment would be less of a strain on his health. In fact, he did not enjoy any relief from this change of work or from any medical help. He had to give up all work, and for the last four months of his life he was confined to bed, able only to read and to pray.

In order to illustrate the spirituality of Brother Stanislas, Blain includes in his biography the resolutions first taken by Stanislas about two years before his death:

I, the undersigned, great sinner that I am, made a resolution last 23 October to seek to fulfill the will of God in all things. I now renew it for the third time on this 6 August, feast of the Transfiguration. I have kept this resolution thus far for nine months and six days. Good Jesus, grant me the grace by the merits of your sacred passion to continue to keep it.

(signed) Brother Stanislas, 6 August 1730. God alone!

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208. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 418.

209. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 176.

210. *Ibid.*, pp. 184–185.

I now add the resolution to follow faithfully the grace I have been given, to feel happy in being a person of no importance. With God's help, I will strengthen this resolution by the continual practice of acts of humility.

On this 8 September, I have resolved to spurn all self-interest. I shall not even think of my sins any more, not even on my deathbed, but shall seek God in pure love.

Blain, who may have been a confessor for Stanislas, says that this last resolution was possibly prompted by scruples which had tormented him for a period of seven or eight years. Stanislas died in Marseille on 4 November 1731.

### Brother Victor (2nd)

Brother Victor (Étienne-Nicolas Morel) was born in Laon on 26 March 1689 and joined the Institute on 4 March 1718; he first made vows for three years, then perpetual vows, but no date is given for these acts; he died in Dieppe on 22 June 1759.<sup>211</sup> He is listed as present in Avignon for Brother Barthélemy's visit there on 10 January 1717, though he did not enter the novitiate until 1718. It is possible that he was sent to be under the guidance of Brother Timothée while Barthélemy was absent from Saint Yon on his tour of the communities in 1717. There is no record of another Brother Victor at that time.<sup>212</sup>

He was in Paris on 21 July 1718<sup>213</sup> when Barthélemy made a visit to the community there; it is possible that he had completed his novitiate by that time; it was, of course, not unusual to send a Brother to community after five months in the novitiate. This is all the documentation on his forty-one years as a Brother which is available at this time.

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211. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 60.

212. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

213. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 12.

## Brother Eusèbe

Brother Eusèbe (Pierre Caron) was born in the town of Sequehart, diocese of Noyon, on 21 September 1697 and entered the Institute on 4 March 1718; he made perpetual vows and lived until 1782 at the age of eighty-five.<sup>214</sup> He was in Marseille in 1727 when Brother Ambroise, the Director, and the other eleven members of the community signed a petition to the city officials asking for official recognition and privileges of a religious congregation approved by the pope and with letters patent from the king.<sup>215</sup>

The most demanding work of his career was evidently in the hospice of the city of Grenoble.<sup>216</sup> It is not clear when he was first assigned, but there is a report of his being there with two other Brothers in 1735. The three Brothers were in charge of the care of 206 boys and men in the hospice. Brother Marcellin, who entered in 1733, was the infirmarian; Brother Gabriel, who entered in 1723, gave the religious instruction, and Brother Eusèbe taught the other classes. The Brothers were responsible for directing the manual labor, for presiding at the meals, for giving out the linens and clothing, for keeping the records of those being admitted and discharged, and for giving a weekly report to the authorities. It was an overwhelming responsibility which gave little or no time for the religious exercises of the Brothers, and this program was continued for fifty years, obviously not always by the same Brothers.

Eusèbe was seventy-four years old when, in August, he and a few other former Directors of community attended the provincial chapter in Avignon arranged by Brother Florence, Superior.<sup>217</sup> At the Chapter he could look back on his experience in the growing Institute over a period of fifty-three years. Finally, it was in Avignon, some ten years later, that Eusèbe went to the reward of his labors on 2 May 1782.

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214. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 60.

215. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 176.

216. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

217. *Ibid.*, p. 348.

## Brother Alexandre (2nd)

Brother Alexandre (Alexandre Quesney) was born in the town of Etrechy, diocese of Sens, on 27 July 1685, entered the Institute in October 1718 at the age of thirty-three, and kept his baptismal name as a Brother; he died in Mans on 29 October 1746.<sup>218</sup> He was one of the three who were present in community before entering the novitiate, for he is listed in the community of Alès during Brother Barthélemy's visit on 6 January 1717; he was probably being trained there by the Director, Brother Bernardin, during Barthélemy's absence from Saint Yon. This, in fact, is all the information available about him at this time.

Another Brother Alexandre, not listed in the *Catalogue*, may have been in the Institute before Brother Alexandre Quesney. He must have been an odd character from what is reported about him by Rigault.<sup>219</sup> He first entered with the family name of Pierre Le François and was dismissed sometime before 1718. He returned in 1731 with a different family name, François Daquin, and not being recognized, was accepted and given the name Brother Polycarpe. He made perpetual vows and became a first-class troublemaker at Saint Yon, where he was a teacher in the boarding school. He is described as proud, unstable, malicious, and spiteful, and he must have been deceitful as well, what with posing under two different family names. Lucard intimates that he also was the one who wrote malicious public letters criticizing Brother Timothée, Superior, to the point that the principal Brothers had to mount a vigorous defense of Timothée.<sup>220</sup> Polycarpe was dispensed from his vows by Rome and dismissed by the Brothers.

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218. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 56.

219. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 302.

220. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 162.

## Brother Sylvestre

Brother Sylvestre (François Regnauldin) was born in Paris on 19 March 1700 and entered the Institute on 16 October 1718.<sup>221</sup> He was in Marseille in 1727 when the Brothers petitioned the city for recognition as a religious congregation.<sup>222</sup> In 1728 Sylvestre was one of the Brothers who made their triennial vows on 14 September and perpetual vows on 21 September in Avignon. Shortly after that, when Brother Gabriel Drolin had returned to France, Sylvestre was sent to Rome to assist Brother Fiacre in the school founded by Gabriel on the Strada Ferrea.<sup>223</sup>

In 1741, when Cardinal Ranieri Delci requested the Brothers for a school in his city, Ferrara, Brother Sylvestre was sent to be the Director.<sup>224</sup> It was there that Sylvestre died in 1747.

This concludes the survey of the first De La Salle Brothers who lived and worked during the lifetime of the Founder, John Baptist de La Salle—except for the account of the first two Superiors, Barthélemy and Timothée, whose stories will be told in the next chapter. De La Salle must have known over 250 Brothers during the forty years he labored to establish the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. They, in turn, had the privilege of knowing and learning from a great man, one who was fired with faith and zeal for the human and Christian education of youngsters—children who without his leadership and the work of his Brothers would have received no education at all.

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221. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 61.

222. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 176.

223. Ibid., p. 181.

224. Ibid., p. 182.

# Chapter Six

## The First Two Superiors

The term Superior General was not used in the beginning of the Institute, simply the title Superior. In fact, the Rule of 1718 states that "The Brothers will not give the name Superior except to the Superior of the Institute . . . and they will never call the Brother Superior of the Institute otherwise than our dear Brother Superior."<sup>1</sup> Brother Barthélemy is considered the first Superior, the title of Founder being the one given to De La Salle.

### Brother Barthélemy

At the end of the four books of his biography of De La Salle, Canon Blain added a supplement<sup>2</sup> in which, among other things, he wrote short biographies of six Brothers who lived during the time of the Founder. First, and considerably the longest, among these is a biography of Brother Barthélemy which takes up some sixty-five pages, the last forty extolling his virtues. Most of what follows in this story about Brother Barthélemy is adapted from Blain's biography. Some additional material is taken from a biography of Barthélemy published in 1930,<sup>3</sup> largely based on Blain's work but providing information not found in Blain.

Brother Barthélemy (Joseph Truffet) was born on 11 February 1678 in the country town of Sains in the diocese of Cambrai, which is

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1. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 49.

2. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8.

3. *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*.

in northern France.<sup>4</sup> Joseph was a twin, but we know nothing of his brother. His father was the respected schoolmaster of the town and, it can be presumed, gave his two sons their elementary education.

Because Barthélemy was regarded as bright, his father sent him to the Jesuit school in Douai. There he completed the classical course and enrolled for the classes in philosophy. His parents hoped that he would choose to become a priest, and in fact this was Joseph's own desire. He requested and received the tonsure, probably around 1698. After his courses in philosophy, he began the study of theology, of which Lucard says he completed the major portion with success.<sup>5</sup> We do not know how long he stayed in this program, but probably in his early twenties he developed the desire to become a religious and indicated his intention to apply for admission to the Trappists.

This was a great disappointment for his parents, who were counting on their son's income as a priest to be the support of their old age. His father especially tried to dissuade his son and even had relatives and friends put pressure on Joseph to change his mind. However, despite all their efforts and Joseph's own desire to please his parents, he asked to be admitted to the Trappists.

Blain says that the young Truffet was of a frail and delicate constitution. In fact, it seems that he was afflicted repeatedly with problems of poor health. No doubt this is why Abbot Rancé refused to accept Joseph to the austere life of the Trappists. He told the young man that God had other plans for him.

Joseph then made an effort to become a Canon Regular. The prior was glad to accept him, but then a quite different problem led the young Truffet to decide against remaining: the Canons Regular were not all that regular; in fact, they were seriously in need of reform. The prior wanted Joseph to stay and help with the reform of his Canons, but this was not the kind of life that the young applicant desired, so he decided to leave.

It was at this point that Joseph heard about the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Paris. How this happened is not known, but it led him to investigate the Brothers' way of life. It is typical of Blain to say that what he found was frightening to his human nature but a joy to his heart: the Brothers' life was as severe as that of the Trappists.

Blain gives a lengthy quotation, possibly from a journal that Barthélemy kept or more probably from a conversation Blain had with him, which the biographer reports in his own effusive way. It

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4. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 38.

5. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 25.

describes a temptation Barthélemy experienced, probably on his way to Paris just before entering the Brothers' community for his training:

This way of life, which at first seemed so attractive to me, suddenly appeared as if it would be unbearable. To be deprived of all one's possessions, to be reduced to a state of complete dependence, to make public profession of contempt for what the world offers, to be in the state of utter subjection that had been described to me—all this made such an impact on my imagination that I became more dismayed than I could have thought possible.

The tempter capitalized on my weakness and went further. He drew a picture of the way these Brothers lived and said to me, "Be careful not to join them. Your frail constitution made it impossible for you to stay with the Trappists, so what hope would you have of remaining in a place where life is only a living death, where men strive only to die to themselves? Their clothing is a rough and often well-patched robe, and their food is no better in quality. But the really unbearable thing about their life is their state of continual constraint and subjection."

Those were the thoughts that troubled my mind and the anxieties that filled my heart as I still hastened along to find my place in that poor and humble way of life. My courage was, in fact, at a low ebb, and I came near the point of abandoning my purpose. But I put my trust in God and braced myself afresh, rebuking my cowardice by saying, "Where is that first fervor which urged you to give yourself to the Lord in the most austere of religious orders? Here you are now, taking fright even before you begin the combat! What cowardice! You're a coward, a coward!"<sup>6</sup>

Joseph was admitted to the novitiate at the *Grande Maison* on 10 February 1703, just a day before his twenty-fifth birthday, and he received the new name of Brother Barthélemy.<sup>7</sup> This was only two months after M. Bricot had been installed as the ecclesiastical superior of the Brothers in Paris, a fact that would have its repercussions in Barthélemy's life later on.

Blain describes further problems that Barthélemy experienced when he became a novice. It seems that the austerity of the novitiate was too much for his physical stamina; also the intensity of his introspection brought on a state of exhaustion. In situations like this, it

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6. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 9.

7. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 38.

seems that De La Salle would sometimes try to relieve the tension by assigning the novice to teach in one of the schools and live with the Brothers in community. Thus it was that Barthélemy was assigned to Chartres after only a few months in the novitiate.

He was not long in Chartres before he was “stricken by a most painful condition,” not explained by Blain, “which necessitated surgery” and left the young Brother with a disability that made it impossible to continue work in school. De La Salle then brought him to help out in the novitiate, which was either at the *Grande Maison* or possibly on the rue de Charonne in the faubourg Saint-Antoine, where it had been moved on 20 August 1703.<sup>8</sup>

Evidently De La Salle was greatly impressed with the help of Barthélemy in the novitiate during the next year and a half, for he admitted him to perpetual vows of association, stability, and obedience on 7 June 1705.<sup>9</sup> Then the following August, the Founder placed him in charge of the novitiate when it was transferred to Saint Yon in Rouen.<sup>10</sup>

Such a rapid series of changes—from troubled novice to unsuccessful work in school to Director of Novices—tells something not only about the qualities of Barthélemy as a person but also about the way De La Salle had to act in the administration of his young Institute. At the time there were probably about seventy Brothers conducting more than two dozen schools in fourteen cities: three schools in Reims, five or six in Paris, possibly five (counting Saint Yon) in Rouen, perhaps one each in Rethel, Guise, and Laon (though Laon may have had two by this time), two in Chartres, one each in Calais, Avignon, Troyes, Darnétal, Dijon, and possibly one in Rome and in Brest.

The Founder did not have too much talent among his men to take charge of all these schools and the communities that served them. In particular, he needed quite a few good school men more urgently than a Director of Novices. No doubt he also saw Barthélemy’s piety, gentleness, and especially his theological education as strong assets for the job of training the few candidates for the relatively short time they remained in the novitiate, possibly an average of three months. He was also available himself to help Barthélemy on the job. An example of how detailed this help could be is the strong direction which Blain has preserved in the form of a letter from De La Salle to Brother Barthélemy, probably written between 1705 and 1709:

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8. Cahiers lasalliens 41/1, p. 39.

9. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 18.

10. Cahiers lasalliens 41/1, p. 39.

At Saint Yon, I noticed you swinging your arms carelessly when you walked. This is a disgraceful habit in a master of novices who ought in all things to be a model for those whom he instructs.

You must walk in a dignified manner, keeping your arms folded, and you must not let your novices do otherwise.<sup>11</sup>

Blain tells us that there was resentment among some of the older Brothers because De La Salle was showing such preference for Barthélemy, who was a newcomer to the Institute, one who had entered only a little more than two years earlier and was now only twenty-seven years old. However, Blain goes on to say that it did not take long for Barthélemy's humility, patience, and daily deeds of kindness to win over the respect and admiration of the older men.

The spirituality of the French School of the seventeenth century and the calibre of Barthélemy's own response to the training he received can be seen in the retreat resolutions he made, probably around this time. Blain says that he copied them from a manuscript in the Brother's own handwriting which was found after his death:

I have resolved:

1. To do all my actions in union with Jesus Christ and according to the dispositions with which he acted.
2. To dread the least sin and the slightest impulse of bodily passions, which war against the Holy Spirit dwelling within us as in his temple.
3. To strive to acquire recollection, both interior and exterior.
4. To be faithful to the practice of obedience, the observance of the Rule, the customs of our community, and in responding to holy inspirations.
5. To do all my actions with the intention of pleasing God, of accomplishing his holy will, and of procuring his glory by imitating Jesus Christ our Lord and in union with him.
6. To follow the example of our Lord in every way possible, for he has said that whoever does this will not walk in darkness.
7. To perform no action without offering a little prayer to the Blessed Virgin, my good Mother.
8. To think every day about those words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Be always ready, for you know not the hour. Be like

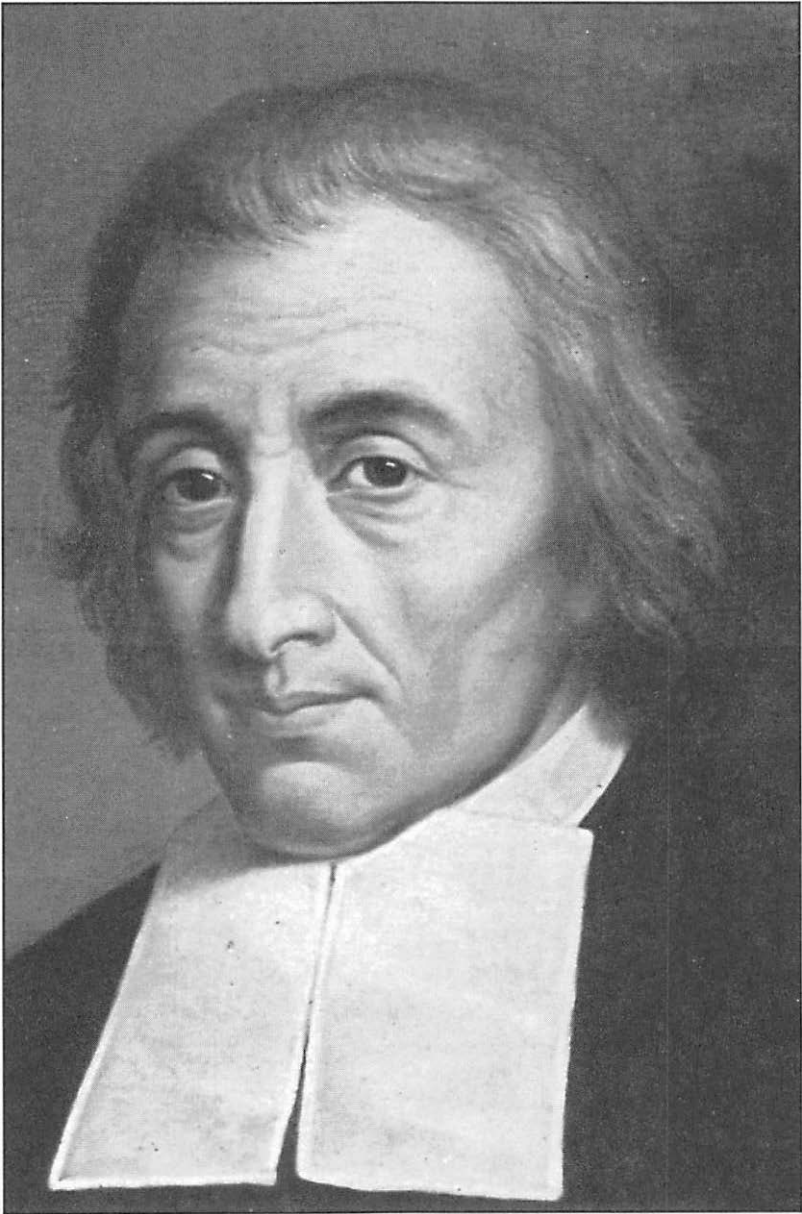
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11. *Letters*, 124.

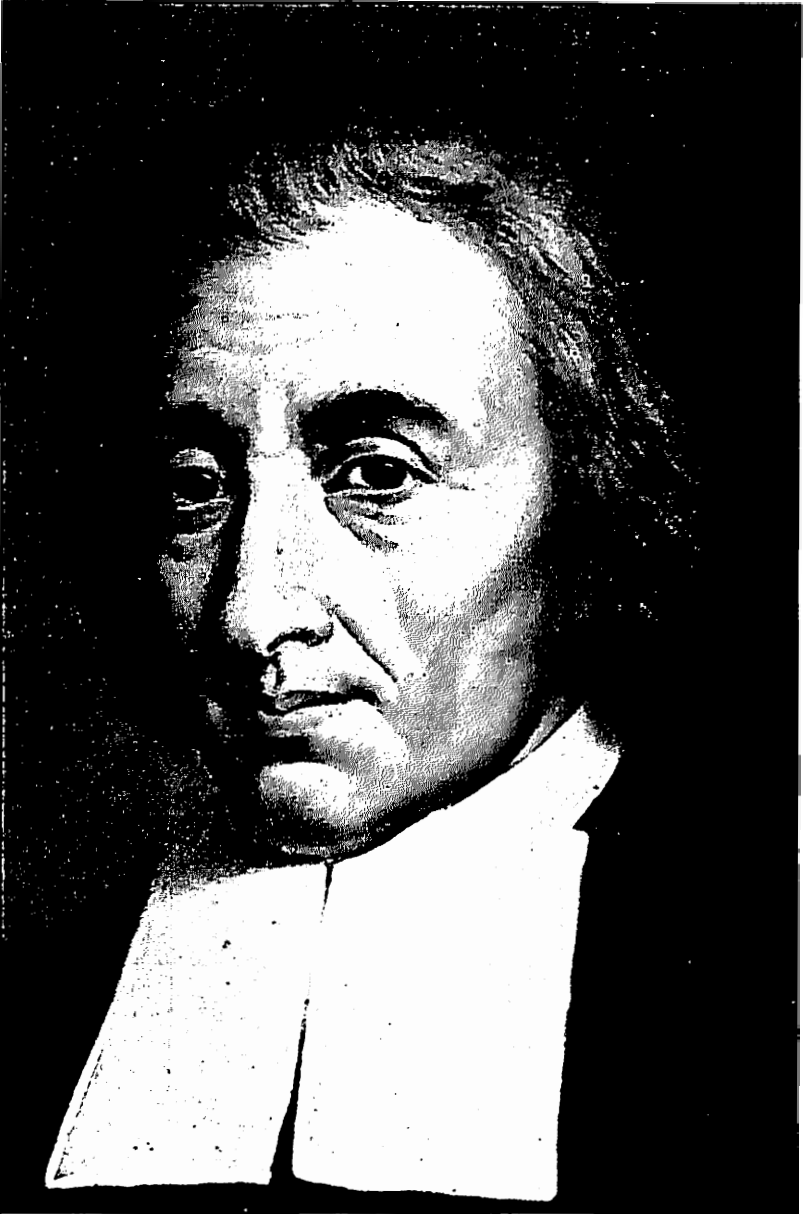
servants waiting the return of their master. Pray unceasingly,” and so on.

9. I shall think of death as coming toward me like a messenger who started out on the day I was born in order to deliver the sentence. I shall regard every day as my last and shall examine myself every so often to check whether I am ready.
10. I shall often reflect that I shall be judged on my thoughts, words, and actions, including especially the useless words I have spoken.
11. I shall avoid making judgments on anyone, in order to avoid being judged myself, but in accord with the advice of the Apostle, I shall often judge myself so that the Lord may have no cause to judge me.
12. I shall always consider myself the least of all my Brothers and their servant, seeing in them the person of our Lord and rendering them services as to Jesus Christ himself.
13. I shall likewise think of myself as the servant of our pupils, and whenever I shall have charge of any, I shall pray for them and see our Lord in them.
14. When I say the *Our Father*, I shall do so as honoring our Lord when he said it on earth; I shall say it for the love of God, for my neighbor, my superiors, my Brothers, my friends and my enemies, for my benefactors, and for the souls in purgatory.
15. When I am passing from one place to another in the house, I shall say the rosary or some other prayer; the same when I am walking in town.
16. I shall always try to pray with recollection and great attention, in a manner worthy of God, fervently.
17. I shall try not to say or do or think anything merely for my own satisfaction but only for the love and glory of God, in union with our Lord Jesus Christ, without whose grace I am nothing and can do nothing.

It is easy to understand how a young man who tried seriously to observe these resolutions could become exhausted from the repeated efforts at such introspection. It is also easy to understand how necessary it was for the young men applying to be Brothers to have a wise and gentle guide, such as the Brothers had in De La Salle, such as De La Salle felt he had in Brother Barthélemy.



Brother Barthélemy, Joseph Truffet (1678–1720), first Superior (1717–1720) of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Portrait in the Chapter Hall of the Generalate in Rome. *Photo E. Roussel (J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 286, plate 153–1).*



Brother Barthélemy, Joseph Truffet (1678–1720), first Superior (1717–1720) of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Portrait in the Chapter Hall of the Generalate in Rome. *Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 286, plate 153–1).*

In 1709, because of the famine in France, the Founder recalled the novices and their Director back to Paris, to the community on the rue de La Barouillère. The move was carried out in the hope of receiving help from the many friends that De La Salle had made during the eighteen years he had lived and worked in the capital city. Nonetheless, conditions in Paris were very severe, and the house was crowded with the twelve Brothers working at Saint Sulpice, the novices, the applicants to the novitiate, and some priests making a retreat. In a letter written at this time to an unnamed Brother, De La Salle says that there were as many as forty in the house at one time.<sup>12</sup>

Even though De La Salle mitigated the practices of the Rule and suspended classes, six of the Brothers came down with scurvy. The help of the well-known Doctor Helvetius was enlisted, and an airy room was set aside for the sick. Among those who ministered to them with great devotion was the Director of Novices, Brother Barthélemy. In time the sick recovered, but meanwhile Barthélemy himself came down with a bad case of scrofula, a tubercular infection that causes the lymph glands to become swollen, especially in the neck. The disease was regarded as highly contagious and incurable.

At this difficult time for Barthélemy, another serious trial fell upon him. His father, the schoolmaster, died. The people of the town petitioned Barthélemy to return home and succeed his father, for it was not uncommon to have the position of schoolmaster handed down from father to son. Barthélemy's mother also pleaded with her son to come home and take care of her:

My dear Son,

Your brother informed you of your father's death, and your good heart led you to send us words of consolation which I have reread often and for which I thank you.

Today I come to ask you for more help. The town councillors have come to me to ask you in their name to continue the office of teacher of Sains in the place of your late father; your former childhood companions would be happy to entrust you with their sons. You will in this way continue the good begun by your father; your presence here will prevent your mother from dying of grief, and your financial support will be assured for the rest of your life.

Farewell, dear son. I count on you. Know that I will be unhappy if obliged to live with your brother, whose work requires him to live away from Sains. I embrace you very tenderly. Your mother,

Josephine Truffet

Sains, 17 March 1710<sup>13</sup>

Some of the Brothers saw this offer as a way of relieving the community of the danger of contagion that the scrofula posed, and they urged De La Salle to let Barthélemy go. Even the doctor recommended that the change would be better for Barthélemy as well as for the community. A Brother was assigned to assist Barthélemy in his departure.

It was a severe trial for De La Salle as well as for Barthélemy, who was very desirous of remaining with the Brothers, though his heart must have been torn by the appeal of his mother. De La Salle was strongly moved by the opinions of the Brothers and the doctor, but he decided to spend the night in prayer before making his final decision. By morning he was convinced that he should keep Barthélemy with the Brothers, and he told him not to leave. The other Brothers accepted De La Salle's decision. Not long afterward, the scrofula was cured.

In time, Brother Barthélemy answered his mother's letter:

My dear Mother,

Please excuse me for being so late in answering your letter. If I were only to listen to the voice of nature, I would have responded immediately to your invitation. But the voice of God was speaking to me also, determining the direction I ought to take in order to correspond to his views in my regard and to allow you the merit of your sacrifice.

Since my vocation comes from God, it enabled you to overcome yourself in your sacrifice. In allowing me to follow it, my father gave up the hope of having me as his successor. He silenced his sorrow in order to allow me to follow the voice which called me to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. You would not wish, dear mother, to revoke the sacrifice which I have made, to have me renounce this holy vocation, and to make me unworthy of the favors which the good God has granted to me.

This good Master has assured my fidelity. He has given me two trials which held my perseverance in suspense. An illness led to an infection in my blood which, according to the doctors, was contagious; this left me almost helpless for several months. There was fear even after my cure that I would become a burden to our newly born community and spread my illness to reduce it even

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12. *Ibid.*, 69.7.

13. *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*, p. 52.

more. It would be a source of uneasiness that my condition would spread around me, and it would create a strain in my Brothers' relations with me.

The Council of the older Brothers had made a decision regarding me, and I recognized that it was well founded; I agreed to it, forced by the wisdom of the action, although I regretted it from the bottom of my heart. I was encouraged to take advantage of the offer of the councillors of Sains and urged to take without delay the succession to my late father, for fear that it would soon be taken by someone else.

At the last moment, M. de La Salle, our Founder, after much prayer, did not agree with the Council; he wished instead that I stay, and he was formally opposed to my leaving. This decision was in accord with my most sincere desire; I regard it as the order of God, and my confreres have all united with it in a religious spirit without the least comment. Shortly thereafter, our Father allowed me to commit myself to the Institute forever.

The question of my future, which concerns you, is thus completely determined, and you no longer need to be concerned about me, despite the poverty of our community. God will know how to provide for our livelihood if we continue to do his work. We already have proofs that the promises of the Gospel are true: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all the rest will be given to you in abundance." You are, dear mother, included in this blessing; I am sure that the Lord will keep a full reward for you.

Be assured, dear mother, of my religious respect and my filial affection in Our Lord.

Paris, 30 April 1710

(signed) Brother Barthélemy<sup>14</sup>

There is a problem here in Barthélemy's mention of his being allowed to commit himself to the Institute forever, because *Livret des Premiers Vœux*<sup>15</sup> lists Barthélemy as having made perpetual vows on 7 June 1705. On this occasion of the plan to have him leave, Barthélemy may mean that he renewed his perpetual vows.

He remained the Director of Novices in Paris, and when De La Salle decided to visit the communities in the south of France, Brother

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14. *Ibid.*, pp. 58–59.

15. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 19.

Barthélemy was chosen by the Founder “to take his place for the leadership of the Society.” This was the case in 1711 during De La Salle’s first trip south but more especially during his stay of more than two years, from February of 1712 until August of 1714.

Blain says that De La Salle subjected Barthélemy to “new tests” before telling him his assignment. It is not clear what these tests were, only that Barthélemy’s virtue did not fail them. Blain also says that the Founder gave him certain instructions about the maintenance of good order and taught him how to conduct himself while De La Salle was away. However, De La Salle did not announce to the Brothers or anyone else this delegation of his authority. It is possible that he considered that this responsibility was implied in the role of Director of Novices or that he did not want to risk encouraging encroachment on the Brothers by the priests of Saint Sulpice, if they knew that he had turned over his authority to one of the Brothers.

This lack of clarity put Barthélemy in an awkward position with some Brothers, so that—probably on the advice of the Directors of the communities in Paris, Versailles, and Saint-Denis—he sent out a letter to all the communities in northern France. The letter assured the Brothers that De La Salle was still the Superior, that he had left Paris to be out of the way of those who were making him a target of their attacks on the work of the Brothers, and that he, Barthélemy, was only a temporary stand-in for the Founder, ready to be of any service that the Brothers might need.

Regarding De La Salle’s seeming neglect to make his appointment of Barthélemy more clear to the Brothers, it must be remembered that the Founder, before going south, had appointed Brother Joseph as Visitor who would be responsible for all the communities in the north except Paris, where Barthélemy resided. It was not, therefore, as if there was no clear authority for the supervision and guidance of the Institute while De La Salle was in the south.

Barthélemy’s letter satisfied most of the Brothers, but “two or three” did not accept his explanations and became troublesome and disorderly. Blain says that “the principal Brothers took steps to have these insubordinates expelled from the Institute.” No doubt Barthélemy presided at some meeting to reach this decision and was the one to deliver the message of expulsion. Apparently the individuals concerned had a history of disrespect for the Founder himself, so the action taken by the Brothers and Barthélemy was probably overdue—perhaps even welcomed by the troublemakers themselves.

Blain recounts how “the Founder’s enemies” in Paris outside the Institute tried to embarrass Barthélemy by sending a representative of

the police to make an investigation of the Brothers' community, supposedly on a complaint of the writing masters. It was evidently no more than a petty harassment of the Brothers, because the effort to trap Barthélemy in questions was unsuccessful. The representative of the police had to leave without accomplishing whatever dishonest mission he had undertaken. Brother Barthélemy, of course, had competent Brothers to assist him in his responsibility, besides the Visitor, Brother Joseph. They were the Directors of the local communities of the Saint Sulpice schools themselves, of Versailles, and of Saint-Denis.

The most serious challenge to Barthélemy during De La Salle's stay in the south was an effort to make a radical change in the organization of the Institute. It seems clear from the early biographers that this effort was carried out by M. de Brou, a diocesan priest attached to Saint Sulpice, who acted under the direction of M. de La Chétardie, whom some consider to be De La Salle's so-called "secret enemy."<sup>16</sup>

Blain writes:

The main points of this new organization were: 1) the Brothers should have superiors from outside the Community, men capable of directing them like the external superiors who direct nuns; 2) the house in Paris should be a separate entity and should depend entirely on the ecclesiastical superior; 3) the novitiate should be suppressed as a useless burden; it cost too much to educate and feed all the novices; moreover, there was no need for so many in Paris, since Brothers should remain fixed in the schools where they taught (as will be explained); 4) the Brothers should stay in one place and not be changed from house to house; 5) to fill the gaps made by those who died or left or who had been dismissed for misconduct, it was proposed to have one, two, or three novices, more or less, in each house, according to its revenues and its personnel needs; 6) finally, a new form of government was set up, but about this we have no definite information.<sup>17</sup>

De Brou succeeded in persuading Brother Barthélemy to accept these changes. Blain says that when the Brothers resisted, their salaries were cut off, and when they went to collect the money, De La Chétardie told them to apply to M. de Brou. This priest went so far as to have a document drawn up and written in *Livret des Premiers Vœux* acknowledging him as Superior of the Brothers in Paris. There

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16. *John Baptist de La Salle: Two Early Biographies*, p. 236, note 199.

17. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 12, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 111.

is some evidence that this was later torn out or that it might have been part of a second *Livret des Premiers Vœux*, a sequel to the first one.<sup>18</sup>

De Brou also persuaded Barthélemy to write to other bishops asking them to assign ecclesiastical superiors for the Brothers' communities in their dioceses, an arrangement existing in Paris since the time Barthélemy had entered the Institute, which may have had some influence on Barthélemy's decision to comply with De Brou's request.

De Brou also tried, probably at the suggestion of De La Chétardie, to have the Rule rewritten and submitted to the cardinal for his approval. The cardinal delayed action and asked one of his staff, M. Vivant, to examine the matter. Fortunately for the Brothers, M. Vivant greatly admired De La Salle and the work of the Brothers, and he held up his report to the cardinal for several months. On 4 April 1714, M. Vivant finally wrote to M. de Brou on behalf of the cardinal, stating that he saw no reason for making any changes in the Rule that De La Salle and the Brothers had written. De Brou was also told that he could govern the schools of Saint Sulpice but not the Brothers.<sup>19</sup>

In all this painful period of interference by the priests of Saint Sulpice, Barthélemy was at a great disadvantage. He was only a substitute for De La Salle as Superior of the Brothers, without election or any clear and public appointment. He was dependent on the priests in whose parish the Brothers were employed and in which the novitiate was located. He was also a mild-mannered person, more inclined to docility than to governing others, and not disposed by nature to confront people in the midst of controversy. He may well have been chosen by De La Salle to be Director of Novices in 1705 partly because of his gentle nature, especially after the experience with the harshness of Brother Michel in 1703.

In his life of De La Salle,<sup>20</sup> Blain speaks at length about the way some of the newly appointed ecclesiastical superiors warned Brother Barthélemy about the changes De Brou was making. They made efforts also to alert De La Salle by letter, but most of these letters did not reach the Founder, because many did not know where De La Salle was.<sup>21</sup>

Lucard<sup>22</sup> says that Barthélemy himself wrote urgent letters to the Founder asking him to return but that De La Salle wrote back saying

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 113; Cahiers lasalliens 3, pp. 11–12.

19. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 15, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 149–150.

20. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 12, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 118ff.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

22. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 130.

that he did not think it was the right moment for him to return to Paris. Because none of these letters has been preserved, we have no way of confirming what Lucard states.

It is not clear how many Brothers in Paris, including Barthélemy himself, were aware of the solemn pledge taken in 1694 which forbade any cleric to be Superior. Only the twelve who took perpetual vows were at that meeting. Further, only three of these Brothers were still living: Gabriel Drolin was in Rome; Jean Jacquot was probably in Grenoble,<sup>23</sup> so only Antoine Partois could have been with Barthélemy as his secretary, which is indicated at the end of a letter from Barthélemy to the bishop of Mende in July 1714 which will be quoted later. In addition, the Brothers in Paris had been given an ecclesiastical superior by the cardinal in 1703.

In any case, the Directors of the communities of Paris, Saint-Denis, and Versailles—most likely also the Visitor, Brother Joseph—realized how serious were the changes attempted by M. de Brou and decided it was time to summon De La Salle back to Paris. Brother Barthélemy called these and possibly other “principal Brothers” together to formulate the historic letter sent to De La Salle on 1 April 1714. It was surely typical of the spirit instilled by De La Salle that “the principal Brothers” would take the initiative when they saw a problem and bring their solution directly or in a written memoir to De La Salle himself.

Here is their letter, actually a “command in virtue of the vow of obedience,” formulated with great respect, but still an order based on the history of the relationship which he had vowed with his Brothers:

Monsieur, our very dear Father,

We, the principal Brothers of the Christian Schools, having in view the greater glory of God, the greater good of the Church and of our Society, recognize that it is of the utmost importance that you should again take up the care and general government of the holy work of God, which is also yours, since it has pleased the Lord to make use of you to establish it and to direct it for such a long time. Everyone is convinced that God gave you and still gives you the graces and talents needed to govern properly this new Society which is so useful to the Church, and it is only just for us to acknowledge that you have always governed it with much success and edification. This is why we very humbly beseech you and command you in the name and on behalf of the

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23. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 218, note 3.

body of this Society to which you have promised obedience, to resume without delay the general government of our Society.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, the signatures on this letter have not been preserved.<sup>25</sup>

Before De La Salle returned, Brother Barthélemy had occasion to write a letter, dated 17 July 1714, which reveals some of the concerns he had to deal with during the Founder's two-year absence. It was written to M. Martinot, the pastor of the parish in Mende, where the Brothers were employed:

Monsieur, it is by an order from M. de Brou, our Superior in Paris, that I have the honor to write to you in order to ask you to be good enough to take notice of what is happening in the community of our Brothers in Mende, who have the happiness of working under your authority for the instruction of a part of the flock entrusted to you and of being themselves among your sheep.

We know from our own experience how great is your zeal for the salvation of souls; it is this that gives us hope that you are willing to take all the steps and measures to secure the order and observance of the Rule which is said not to exist among these Brothers in your city. For we have learned from what has been written to us from Mende and also from Brother Isidore, who left there and passed through Paris, that Brother Henri has treated the Brothers poorly, has taken on so much of a worldly spirit that he has been thinking of getting married, that the Brothers no longer have any prayers, nor silence, nor any of the other practices necessary to preserve themselves in the spirit of piety and charity.

Further, we have learned that Brother Henri has spread word around that our Society was breaking apart in Paris and that there was no longer any observance of the Rule. Also that he was doing everything he could to urge the mother of one of our Brothers from Mende, who is in Paris, to write to her son everything that would give him a disgust for his vocation, and we have recognized the truth of all this by its effects. Recently we have been notified yet again that he has sent a letter to the mother of the Brother in Mende under the name of his uncle, in order to

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24. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 12, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 118.

25. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 513, note 72; the caption in English for slide 277 in Rousset's *Iconographie* (1979) reads "the three signatures on the letter," but these signatures are examples reproduced from other documents.

deceive her. Finally, we have learned that he treated M. de La Salle disrespectfully and forced him to depart from the Brothers in Mende.

All of these matters, Monsieur, if you judge it proper, could persuade you to advise your bishop about the conduct of our Brothers in Mende so that if His Excellency deems it proper, he may appoint someone to oversee their conduct.

I have learned that M. de La Salle has left Grenoble some weeks ago to visit our houses in Provence. I take the liberty, Monsieur, to tell you that the pastor of Saint Sulpice died with the reputation of holiness on the recent feast of Saint Peter and that M. de Gergy, who was his vicar, is now his successor as pastor of the parish.

I have the honor to be, with the most profound respect and much gratitude, Monsieur, your very humble and obedient servant.

(signed) Brother Barthélemy

I forgot to tell you that our houses in the province of Paris are guided by the care of local ecclesiastical superiors appointed by my Lords [the bishops]. Paris, 17 July 1714.

Our Brother Antoine takes the liberty to greet you very humbly.<sup>26</sup>

According to Blain,<sup>27</sup> De La Salle was still in Grenoble when De La Chétardie died on 29 June 1714. He returned to Paris on 10 August. Barthélemy continued as Director of Novices. Blain states that before De La Salle would accept the title of Superior, he asked Barthélemy to send a copy of the letter of 1 April 1714 to the Brothers in Provence for their agreement, which Barthélemy did, and it was signed by the Brothers there and returned without delay. Blain adds that there were only some words in that copy that were changed—from “We ask you to return” to “We ask you to resume the leadership of our Society.”<sup>28</sup> One cannot but wonder if De La Salle requested the change or if there were other reasons.

Though he accepted the title of Superior for the time being, De La Salle made every effort to complete his long-held plan to have the Brothers take full responsibility for the Institute. This is clear from the document that appointed Barthélemy to visit the communities in

26. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, pp. 313–315.

27. Blain, 2, book 3, chap. 13, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 121.

28. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 19.

preparation for a General Assembly of the Brothers. It was De La Salle who took this initiative. He called a meeting of the principal Brothers of Saint Yon on 4 December 1716; these were Brother François, Director of the boarding school at Saint Yon; Brother Dosithée, Director of the community and schools in Rouen; Brother Ambroise, Director of those held in detention at Saint Yon, and Brothers Charles and Étienne, teachers at Saint Yon. Their document reads:

We, the undersigned, Brothers of the Christian Schools, assembled in the house of Saint Yon to take care of what is most urgent for the good our Institute, recognize that for almost a year M. de La Salle, our Founder, has been retired here because of illness during that time, and we judge it proper, and even necessary, to commission Brother Barthélemy, who has been assigned to guide our Institute for several years, to make a visit without delay to all the houses dependent on the Institute, in order to learn all that is transpiring there and the manner in which they are being conducted, so that later it can be decided, with the principal Brothers of our Society, what means should be taken to establish, preserve, and maintain union and uniformity in the Institute, to draw up and determine regulations, and to provide at the same time for the general government of the Institute in an assembly which he will state will be held in the house of Saint Yon from the feast of Ascension to the feast of Pentecost.

(signed) Brother François, Brother Dosithée, Brother Charles, Brother Ambroise, and Brother Étienne

I believe proper what the Brothers have resolved above, the day, the month, and the year, in the house of Saint Yon.

(signed) De La Salle

We, the undersigned, Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rouen, appointed by the archbishop, approve of Brother Barthélemy's being absent during the months ahead in order to do what M. de La Salle and the Brothers have judged necessary. I believe it to be as necessary as they do.

(signed) Blain<sup>29</sup>

The document is then notarized by two lawyers, Luce and Sanadon.<sup>30</sup>

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29. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, pp. 162–163.

30. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 182.

On 6 December 1716, Barthélemy set out from Saint Yon on horseback for his tour of the twenty-two communities in France.<sup>31</sup> The following day, he arrived at Chartres. Brother Hubert was the Director; Brothers Sébastien, Cyprien, and Pierre made up the community with him. Barthélemy showed them the document describing the purpose of his visit, and they in turn drew up a document describing their agreement with the proposal, which they all signed:

We, the undersigned Brothers of the Society of the Christian Schools of Chartres, acknowledge that our dear Brother Barthélemy, charged for several years with the guidance of our Institute, has come here from the house of Saint Yon in the faubourg of Rouen where he resides, that he arrived here in our house on 7 December 1716 to make his visit according to the custom of our Institute, that we have given him an account of the conduct of our house and of our finances, that we agree completely that an assembly be held of the principal Brothers of our Institute in the aforesaid house of Saint Yon at the time indicated to us by our aforesaid Brother, to settle and establish our regulations and to provide by them at the same time for the government of our Institute, and that we are committed to do and to follow what will have been settled at this assembly. In faith of which we have signed. Done at Chartres, 9 December 1716.

From Chartres, Barthélemy went to Moulins through Orléans and Bourges, arriving on 15 December. After a short rest, he began his visit, reviewing the classes and interviewing each of the Brothers personally. He held a conference with them together and asked them to draw up a document attesting to his visit, similar to the one prepared by the Brothers of Chartres, which they did. It was signed by the two members, Brothers Philippe and Roch.

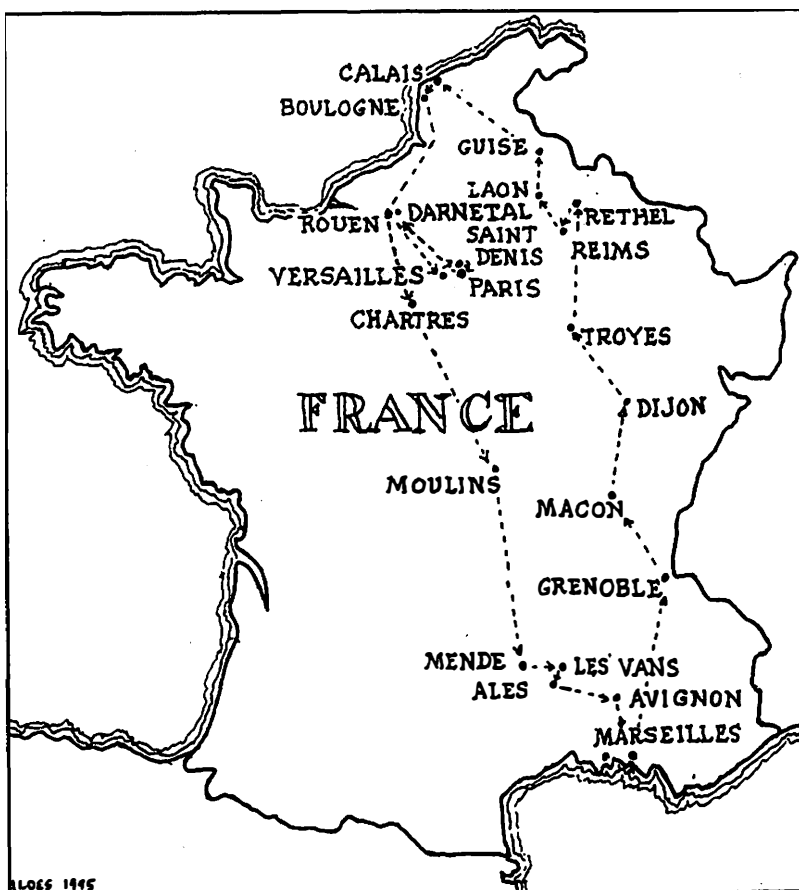
Barthélemy then started out for Mende, a dangerous journey because of the mountainous terrain and the increasingly cold weather. As happened several times on his journey, he encountered a particularly perilous section of the road, and he had to cross a river. Part way across, the horse balked, evidently sensing that the water was too deep. In vain Barthélemy tried to urge the steed forward. At that critical moment, Barthélemy sighted a man on the other side, who directed him to a safer crossing. In recounting this incident, Barthélemy explained that he had trusted in God's help and was not disappointed.

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31. The account of this journey presented here is taken from *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*.

It took him eight days to make this trip, and he arrived late on Christmas Eve, much to the surprise and delight of the Director, Brother Henri, and his confrere Nicolas (about whom there is no mention in the *Catalogue*). After the usual official visit, Henri drew up the act of agreement on 27 December, similar to the formula of Chartres but adding the following lines:

With all due respect for our Superiors, we stipulate the condition that some of our Brothers from this part of the country not be deprived of participating [in the assembly] and that we will have a part in the voting to settle and fix our regulations.



Brother Barthélemy's visit to all the communities in France, 9 December 1716 to 7 May 1717.

This addition may throw some light on the personality of Brother Henri, who may have been lacking in hospitality to the Founder on his visit in 1713.

Both Brothers signed the document. Their request was eventually granted, for three Brothers from the south of France—Timothée from Avignon, Jacques from Grenoble, and Bernardin from Alès—did attend the General Assembly.

From Mende Barthélemy went to Les Vans, arriving on 29 December 1716. Brothers Maximin and Mathieu tried unsuccessfully to have him stay with them for New Year's Day, but their document of agreement was signed 31 December, and Barthélemy pressed on to Alès, arriving on 2 January 1717.

It was on that part of that journey, through the Cévennes mountains, that he encountered what he often told the Brothers was a special rescue by Divine Providence. At a point where the snow had completely obscured any vestige of the road and when he had given up all hope of finding his way, he made a special act of trust in God and prayed fervently for help from his guardian angel. Almost at that very moment, he looked up to see at some distance a group of travelers, who beckoned him to follow them without fear. He thanked God and concluded that a miracle had happened, for the travelers vanished once he had moved on in safety to a clear path in the road. He took a good rest at Alès, where he had the act of his visit and the agreement signed by Brothers Bernardin, Zosime, Martinien, and Alexandre on 7 January.

Barthélemy arrived at Avignon the evening of the next day, staying there only two days with Brothers Timothée, Victor, Hugues, and Sérapion. The document with their signatures was dated 10 January.

Five days later, he was in Marseille, quite fatigued from this stage of his journey. He received the signatures there of Brothers Lazare and Saturnin on 16 January. Aroz gives the name Mathurin instead of Saturnin,<sup>32</sup> but the actual name on the document of the visit is Saturnin, as Gallego shows.<sup>33</sup>

A week later, Barthélemy was with the Brothers of Grenoble: Jacques, Stanislas, Bernard, and Alexis, who signed their names to the act of agreement with the date 26 January.

From Grenoble to Dijon was yet another tiring journey because of the rigors of the roads and the weather. Barthélemy was worn out when he arrived, and he rested with Brothers Antoine and Barnabé,

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32. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

33. Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 543, note 3.

securing their signatures before leaving on 8 February. On 15 February, he arrived in Troyes, where on 17 February Brothers Romain and Casimir gave their signatures to the act of agreement.

On his trip from Troyes to Rethel, Barthélemy was joined by two suspicious characters who seemed intent on robbing him but were apparently unable to accomplish their purpose, through some mysterious power that prevented them from speaking to him or raising a hand against him. Barthélemy again attributed his safety to Providence, and he thanked God when the two men finally left him.

Barthélemy described this experience to Brother Louis and the three other Brothers at Rethel—Maur, Damien, and Alphonse—when he arrived on 21 February 1717. On 23 February, after receiving their signatures on the approval for the General Assembly, Barthélemy left for Reims.

In Reims he was welcomed by Brothers Joseph, Paul, Clément, Simon, Gervais, Grégoire, Placide, Médard, and Sulpice, staying with them for three days. They, too, signed the document of agreement. On 28 February, he left for his visit with the Brothers of Laon: André, Irénée, René, Benoît, and Eustache. He visited with them from 2 to 4 March, securing the signatures of all on their agreement to the proposed General Assembly.

In Guise he met with Brothers Charles, Christophe, and Alexis and secured their agreement. Some biographers have listed the name Albert in place of Alexis on this document. In fact the name is Alexis.<sup>34</sup> It is the same signature on the document signed by the community in Grenoble. This undoubtedly means that Alexis was transferred from Grenoble to Guise between 26 January and 7 March 1717. It is possible that Alexis was a novice, entering in 1716 and assigned to Grenoble during Barthélemy's visits to all the communities.<sup>35</sup> The only item listed about him in the *Catalogue* is that he left the Institute. A Brother Albert is not in the *Catalogue* until 1718.<sup>36</sup>

Barthélemy next completed his trip to the north: in Calais from 16 to 18 March, he met with Brothers Norbert, Thomas, Nicaise, Hilarion, Luc, and Fabien, and in Boulogne from 18 to 21 March, he visited Brothers Fiacre, Anastase, Marc, Romuald, Félix, and Rigobert. Norbert signed for the Brothers in Calais;<sup>37</sup> the Brothers in Boulogne signed their own names, as in all the other communities, on the document of agreement.

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34. *Livre de Visite*, Generalate Archives, BJ 504, dos. 2.

35. Cf. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 58.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

37. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 186.

From Boulogne Barthélemy might have gone to Paris, Saint-Denis, and Versailles, but he preferred to return to Saint Yon in order to assist at the community celebration of Holy Week and Easter.

On the way, he had an accident as he was getting off his horse to take a meal in the village of Bray. His foot got caught in the bottom of his robe and mantle, and he could not get it out of the stirrup. He fell down on the road, the horse became excited, and it began to drag him along the ground. Fortunately some bystanders saw the accident and rushed to control the animal and release the bruised Brother. Again Barthélemy felt it was God who saved him from serious harm. He arrived at Saint Yon the next day and was able to share with De La Salle the joy he experienced meeting all the Brothers throughout France.

On 27 March, he visited the community of the Brothers who taught in the four schools of Rouen and received their document of approval for the General Assembly, signed by all—Brothers Dosithée, Vincent, Jean-Baptiste, Basile, Augustin, Antonin, Honoré, Dorothee, Didace, and Remi. On Wednesday, 2 April, the week before Holy Week, he visited Darnétal, where Brothers Bruno and Robert were stationed, and received their signed document of agreement.

On 14 April, Easter Monday, Barthélemy left for Versailles, arriving on 16 April, and secured the official signed agreement of Brothers Côme, Paulin, Macaire (about whom there is no record in the *Catalogue* or any other information), and Hyacinthe. At Saint-Denis, the document was signed on 18 April by Jean-François and Dominique.

At Paris, Brothers Jean, Michel, Jean-Chrysostome, Jérôme, Symphorien, Victorin, Edmond, Maurice, Zacharie, Léonard, and Germain welcomed him and kept him from 20 to 25 April. It was on that last date that they all signed their document of agreement.

Barthélemy returned to Saint Yon and completed the collection of the documents of agreement on 7 May with the signatures of all the members of that community: François, Ambroise, Étienne, Théodore, Onésime, Martin, Léon, Hilaire, and Mathias (not the one who received the letters by De La Salle).

It was quite a journey for Barthélemy, six months in duration, from 6 December 1716 to 7 May 1717, covering at least 1,000 miles on horseback, visiting twenty-two communities, receiving ninety-nine signatures (twice from Alexis). It must have been an exhausting feat, especially for a man not known to be robust, but it was also an encouraging experience meeting all the Brothers in their various apostolic works. The twenty-two documents with the signatures of the Brothers are preserved in the Generalate Archives in Rome.

Barthélemy could report to De La Salle that all were in full approval of his plan for the General Assembly and its work, that all the Brothers received him with joy, openness, and docility.

Ascension Thursday was on 6 May that year, when the principal Brothers were to have arrived for the Assembly. Some, coming from a distance, may have arrived at that time, but the Assembly actually began on Pentecost Sunday, 16 May. Sixteen Brothers, Directors of their respective communities, were present: Jean Jacquot, Paris; Jean-François, Saint-Denis; Joseph, Reims; Norbert, Calais; Charles, Guise; Hubert, Chartres; Timothée, Avignon; Barthélemy, Saint Yon; Bernardin, Alès; Fiacre, Boulogne; Bruno, Darnétal; Jacques, Grenoble; Dosithée, Rouen; Louis, Rethel; André, Laon, and Côme, Versailles.

The Directors of six communities in which there were only two Brothers to carry on the work of the school were unable to attend: Philippe, Moulins; Henri, Mende; Maximin, Les Vans; Lazare, Marseille; Barnabé, Dijon, and Romain, Troyes.<sup>38</sup> Three Directors—those of Avignon, Grenoble, and Alès—were present to represent the other Directors from the south who could not attend.

De La Salle initiated the work of the Assembly by giving a talk on the importance of the task to be accomplished. He proposed a method for the election of the new Superior, taken in part from the Constitutions and Rule of the Jesuits. He also composed a prayer to the Holy Spirit and made copies for the members of the Assembly, which Blain says the Brothers used five or six times a day, probably at the opening of the different sessions of the Assembly. After refusing the Brothers' request that he preside at their meetings, he withdrew to his room to add his prayers to theirs.

The General Assembly elected Brother Barthélemy as Superior on the second day, and at his request, the delegates also selected two Assistants to help him in the administration of the Institute: Jean Jacquot, Director of the community in Paris, and Joseph Le Roux, Director of the community in Reims. Both continued in their role as Director of the community; Barthélemy consulted with them as the need arose.

The work of the Assembly focused on a review of the Rule and practices of the Institute, as advised by De La Salle. This task continued until Trinity Sunday, 23 May, when, having completed their work, the Brothers, according to custom, renewed their vows, first De La Salle and Barthélemy and then all the others.

The Brothers gave De La Salle all their suggestions about the Rule, asking him to make whatever revision he desired. Blain says

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38. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, pp. 408–409.

that De La Salle did this “with great diligence.” The Founder added a significant first article on the spirit of the Institute, the spirit of faith, putting stress on this spirit as more important than all the other practices of the Rule. Similarly, he wrote an introductory article to a new chapter, “Observance of the Rule,” stating that love of God and love of neighbor are fundamental to all the details of the Rule.<sup>39</sup> Chapters were added on the serving Brothers, on modesty, and on traveling, and some articles on school matters not yet in the Rule were appended.<sup>40</sup> It is not clear how much of these new chapters was added by the Brothers, how much by De La Salle.

The chapter on recreation in the 1705 Rule includes thirty-two articles that list the topics to be talked about during recreation; this list was excluded from the Rule of 1718 but remained in the 1711 edition of *Collection of Various Short Treatises*.<sup>41</sup> The omission of this list in the Rule may have been a concession by De La Salle to some Brothers who had expressed a desire for mitigating the strict regulations governing the time of recreation.

Lucard<sup>42</sup> says that De La Salle wrote out the entire Rule in his own hand, that copies were made for each of the communities, and that Barthélemy initialed each page and signed his name at the end. This work consumed the greater part of a complete year, judging from the date, 31 October 1718, on the one copy that has been preserved, which was sent to Troyes, to which Barthélemy added the following:

We, the undersigned, Superior of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, send to our very dear Brothers of the city of Troyes the above copy of the Rule, containing thirty-two chapters, with the formula for the renewal of vows, initialed by us, according as they were established by us and by the Brother Directors of our said Society in our assembly held in the house of Saint Yon, suburb of Rouen, in the month of May 1717, in order to be put into practice and observed by our said Brothers. In consequence of this, we declare null all other Rules which may be found in any of our houses. In faith of which, we have signed. Done in our house at Saint Yon this 31 October 1718.

(signed) Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy.<sup>43</sup>

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39. See Cahiers lasalliens 45, pp. 320–325, for an explanation by Miguel Campos of the significance of these two articles.

40. Cahiers lasalliens 25, pp. 59, 63, 78.

41. *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, pp. 24–29.

42. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 362.

43. Cahiers lasalliens 25, p. 146.

De La Salle may have completed his work by the time he went to the Seminary of Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet on 4 October 1717, or he may have continued that work in his retreat there. Once De La Salle had completed his revision, copies for all the twenty-two communities were made by one or more secretaries. The Troyes copy is in the handwriting of Brother Michel Floquet.<sup>44</sup>

A copy of the Rule of the Brother Director has also been preserved; it was dated 3 October 1718 and was sent to Brother Jean-François, Director of the community of Saint-Denis. Blain says that the Rule of the Brother Director was originally composed by De La Salle about 1700. There is no way to determine what changes, if any, were made by the Directors before De La Salle did the final copy. The copy sent to Brother Jean-François concludes with the following statement:

We, the undersigned, Superior of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, send to our dear Brother Jean-François, Director of the house of our Brothers of the Christian Schools at Saint-Denis, the Rule of a Director of the Brothers of our Society as above transcribed, together with two chapters, one on the habit, the other on the food of the Brothers of our Society, altogether contained in seven pages, each initialed by us, the said Rule and the two chapters as they were drawn up and approved by us and by the Brothers Director of our said Society in our Assembly that was held in our house of Saint Yon, suburb of Rouen, in the month of May, in the year seventeen hundred and seventeen, for the use and observance of our said Brother and his successors in their responsibility as Director, in faith of which we have signed in our said house of Saint Yon, this third day of October, seventeen hundred and eighteen.

Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy.<sup>45</sup>

On 23 May 1717, at the conclusion of the General Assembly, the Brothers signed a statement of agreement on the election of Brother Barthélemy, on the election of the two Assistants, and on their work of revising the Rule. It was notarized by the lawyer Sanadon and concludes with this statement, followed by the signatures of all the participants at the General Assembly:

Regarding the revision of the rules and practices which are in use in our Society, we declare that we have observed the formal

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44. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

procedures demanded in this matter concerning the prayers, devoted work, and a complete renouncement of our own feelings; we have decided nothing without having reflected a great deal and after much consultation and deliberation; we have accepted the majority vote, striving in everything only for the greatest good of our Society. Done at our house of the novitiate at Saint Yon, this 23 May 1717, feast of the Most Holy Trinity.<sup>46</sup>

This declaration shows that the Directors had taken seriously their responsibility to revise the Rule. On 6 July 1717, Brother Barthélemy appeared before the king's councillors, their lawyers, the clerks of the records of inheritance, and the royal and apostolic lawyers of the city of Rouen to present and entrust to the municipal archives of the city all the documents of the General Assembly notarized by Sanadon. These included the commission of Barthélemy on 4 December 1716 to visit all the communities preparatory to the General Assembly, the twenty-two documents signed by the communities he visited, and the statement of agreement concerning all the decisions of the General Assembly, signed by all the participants.<sup>47</sup> It is clear that Barthélemy and the Brothers, guided by De La Salle, had a keen sense of the importance of the legal status of their decisions, especially since as yet the Institute had not acquired letters patent.

In the meantime, Barthélemy had a lot of other work to do as the Superior. His residence was at Saint Yon when he was not making his official visits to the communities. Blain, as the ecclesiastical superior of the Brothers in Rouen, must have been an eyewitness and have had other firsthand information about Barthélemy. He writes in the supplement to his biography of De La Salle that Barthélemy was not only "vigilant and strict about the observance of the Rule" but also

affable and obliging to all the Brothers. . . . Anyone wishing to speak to him found him full of charity, always prepared to listen to those who desired to see him and gently sympathetic to any who were suffering temptations. . . . [His] spiritual depth, nourished and sustained as it was by his unswerving fidelity to prayer, was the source of the enlightenment which served him on all occasions: guiding him in what he had to do, showing him what to say and how to act in difficult situations, and enabling him to find time for all that had to be done.<sup>48</sup>

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46. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, pp. 355–360.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 366, footnote.

48. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 20–21.

Among his duties was that of writing letters to the Brothers. One of the first was undoubtedly a letter to Brother Gabriel Drolin, which Gabriel preserved.<sup>49</sup> In it Barthélemy gives Gabriel the news of the Assembly and of his own election, asking Gabriel to accept decisions made, also about the purchase of Saint Yon and the possible mission to Canada, and he requests Gabriel to visit Saint Peter's and pray there for the Institute.

A good number of Barthélemy's letters, mostly copies, are preserved in the Generalate Archives in Rome. The following example will illustrate his style and also the attitude of the early Brothers about perseverance in the Institute:

On the night of 19–20 June 1719, one of our Brothers, a member of the Society for several years and working in a school, was strongly tempted to give up his vocation. He came to me and asked that I get him some secular clothing. I agreed but added that if I put off giving it to him, it was for his good. He appeared to be persuaded to accept that, and he even added that the kindness which had always been shown to him since he had entered the Society caused the one difficulty he had about leaving. I responded that this ought not to cause him any trouble but rather that he ought to think about what he was going to do, that he was going to follow the temptation of the devil, and that assuredly he had been called to be among us. Seeing him unsettled, I persuaded him to make a retreat in order to know better the will of God. He made this retreat in the novitiate, and he was strongly inspired to be faithful to the Rule in the Society until the last moment of his life, to have recourse to God by prayer, and to turn to the Most Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph, and M. de La Salle.

His fidelity to follow this light of the Holy Spirit seemed to merit what follows. One evening, he went to bed in the dormitory with the others, then awakening during the night, asked God for perseverance, begging the help of the Most Blessed Virgin, Saint Joseph, and our very dear Father. Then, opening his eyes, he was greatly astonished to see the room full of a bright light. At first he thought it was daylight and that everyone had gotten up. With that thought he started to get up, when he saw the figure of M. de La Salle.

Frightened by this, he tried to cry out but was unable; he was allowed only to look. He believed then to see our Father with ruddy

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49. *Letters*, 32(a).

face, dressed in his priestly vestments, that is, in a shiny white satin chasuble with red roses and hyacinths in the form of a cross. He had his right hand raised, as if to command and announce in the manner of a preacher; he twice called the Brother by his name. The Brother, feeling reassured and listening carefully, heard these words: “My son, I know the bottom of your heart. I tell you on behalf of God to persevere in the state to which you have been called by Divine Providence and to observe the Rule to the letter. If you do that, you will have eternal life. If you do not persevere but return to the world, you will be lost.”

At these words, the good Brother wanted to get up to kneel down, but the vision went out like a light, and he found himself in the darkness of the night, thoroughly astonished, consoled, and strengthened. He gave thanks to God and got up immediately to assure himself that this was not a dream. He wanted to speak to the Director of Novices, who, he thought, was sleeping in the same dormitory, but he could not find him and went back to bed. What could be a proof that the vision was not a dream is the fact that throughout the following day, his eyes, hurt by the brilliance of the light he had seen, caused him pain.

The Brother, so well warned, took the resolution to persevere in his vocation, and he did in fact persevere for some time in great fidelity to the Rule. But the violence of his passions, which were lively and which he did not sufficiently control, reawakened the temptation, and he succumbed to it without being stopped by the terrible prediction that M. de La Salle had made to him: that he would lose himself if he returned to the world.<sup>50</sup>

One of the first things the new Superior had to do was make administrative appointments. He called Brother Thomas from Calais to Saint Yon to act as business manager in charge of temporal and financial matters for Saint Yon and the Institute generally, even as De La Salle had done. He named two Visitors, Brother Timothée Samson-Bazin (the future Superior) to be Director of Avignon and to be responsible for the communities in the south and Brother Fiacre Nonnez, Director of Boulogne, to be Visitor in the north.

He called Brother Dosithée, Director of the community in Rouen, to be the Director of Saint Yon and Prefect of the detention center for adults at Saint Yon. Brother Michel Floquet was taken from Paris to replace Dosithée as Director of the community in Rouen. Barthélemy

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50. *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*, pp. 158–160.

called Brother Irénée du Lac de Montisambert (this is how the name is written in the register at Saint Yon) from Laon to be Sub-Director of the novitiate. For the time being, it seems, Barthélemy continued to act as Director, in effect training Irénée to take over the responsibility as soon as he was ready.<sup>51</sup>

Lucard<sup>52</sup> says that at this time Barthélemy began to visit the communities and receive from each of them an act of agreement on the work of the General Assembly. On 11 November 1717, for example, he paid a visit to the community of Saint Sulpice in Paris. He had several purposes in this visit, as is made clear in the record of his visit which is preserved in the Institute archives.<sup>53</sup>

First, he asked the Brothers residing there to sign a document confirming the work of the General Assembly, including his own election as Superior. Second, he made the usual spiritual and temporal visitation which the Superior was expected to make in the communities, speaking with each Brother individually. Third, he officially opened a new school near Les Invalides, which had actually started on the previous Monday with two Brothers sent from Saint Yon, and fourth, he installed his new Assistant, Jean Jacquot, as Director of the Paris community.

The document attesting to the visit is signed by fourteen Brothers, including Fiacre, newly appointed Visitor of the communities in the north. Rigault<sup>54</sup> says that Fiacre was making his visit to the community at that time and had previously been Director of the community in Boulogne. If Rigault is correct, it is interesting that one of the Assistants, Jean, as Director, and one of the Visitors, Fiacre, as a member, both resided in the same school community with the twelve other Brothers who signed the document: Jean-Chrysostome, Jérôme, Victorin, Maurice, Léonard, Germain, Anastase, Alexis, Séverin, Ignace, Denis, and Pascal (the last two at the new school near Les Invalides).

Not everyone, apparently, was equally accepting of Barthélemy's election. Later on, after the death of the Founder, one Director told him that two or three of the more senior Brothers of the Institute would have preferred the election of someone else, possibly of an ecclesiastical superior. In turn, Barthélemy wrote to him:

I would never dispute with our Brothers for the role of Superior. I am and always will be ready to give it up to anyone the Society

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51. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 367.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

53. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 413.

54. *Ibid.*

would want to choose for this task, which I look upon as a heavy burden.

I know besides that some people outside the Institute did not want the Brothers to have one among them for Superior, but it is clear that God has not given them the understanding and the necessary knowledge to guide our Institute. It is impossible that anyone who has not lived with the Brothers and not known them could govern them properly. Our conviction in this matter is shared by the people in France who have made the most serious study of our life in community.

As for myself, I would willingly give up the heavy burden which has been imposed on me for a penance. I would willingly call a second Assembly whenever they want it, and I would ask them to accept my resignation. Alas! what a heavy responsibility it is to be charged with the government of the Institute! How much I must understand the judgments of God! What an account I will have to give to him!

I beg you to make my task less painful by your exact fidelity to the Rule and by helping your Brothers observe it; you are for them the guardian and defender of the Rule.<sup>55</sup>

Lucard<sup>56</sup> says that on 17 December 1717, the Superior was in Rethel to install the Brothers there in a new community house that De La Salle had purchased in June 1715 from Étienne Champion, as recorded in the records of Pauffin, the attorney for Rethel.

Barthélemy returned to Rouen on learning of the death of the Marchioness de Louvois toward the end of December. She had rented Saint Yon to De La Salle in July 1705. Now her heirs wanted to sell the property, and the Brothers became alarmed at the prospect of losing what had become the center of the Institute. De La Salle, consulted at his retreat in the Seminary of Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet, was not the least disturbed, but immediately, as a show of confidence, he arranged for all his liturgical vestments and books to be moved from Saint Sulpice in Paris to Saint Yon in Rouen.

As it turned out, the son of the Marchioness, M. de Louvois, was executor of his mother's will and favorably disposed to the Brothers. He entered into negotiations with Brothers Thomas and Barthélemy. Blain<sup>57</sup> says that the negotiations broke off twice during a two-month

55. *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*, pp. 262–263.

56. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 369.

57. Blain, 2, book 3, chap. 15, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 148.

period, probably due not so much to the hesitation of M. de Louvois himself as to the concern of the other heirs. Eventually the sale was completed on 8 March 1718 at the residence of M. de Louvois in Paris and in the presence of many distinguished relatives of the Marchioness who were heirs of the estate. The price was 15,000 livres.

At one point in the negotiations, the sale evidently included 9,000 livres down payment and 6,000 livres in three installments due on the first of January 1719, 1720, and 1721, with an interest of five percent on the unpaid sum.<sup>58</sup> There is a record of the sale at which the sum of 9,000 livres was paid, intimating that three installments were to follow.<sup>59</sup> But Lucard,<sup>60</sup> referring to records of Sanadon, the Rouen attorney, and of the "Institute Archives," says that the 15,000 livres were all paid at the same time. Unfortunately, those records are not available.

Lucard, in the same account, explains rather convincingly how the Brothers were able to raise 15,000 livres. He states that 5,200 livres came from the legacy of Rogier, money actually belonging to De La Salle but appropriated by Rogier in the Clément affair; that 6,660 livres came from investments and their interest, made in the city of Rouen by De La Salle in 1713; that 2,340 livres came from contributions of the communities of Paris, Reims, Versailles, Guise, Boulogne, and Calais; the remaining 800 livres were probably put together by Brother Thomas from the operating income of Saint Yon and from friends of the Brothers in Rouen.<sup>61</sup>

In any case, the purchase of Saint Yon was made in the names of Brothers Barthélemy and Thomas, using their civil names (Joseph Truffet and Charles Frappet), because the Institute, without letters patent, had no legal standing. In order to give further assurance of ownership by the Brothers, Barthélemy had a document signed on 3 June 1718 by the fourteen Brothers who were then living at Saint Yon, attesting to their residence at Saint Yon and their part in the purchase. The names of these Brothers, as listed on the document, are:

Georges Bertin, Brother François, Director of the boarding school; Claude Longière, Brother Dosithée, Director of the detention center; Claude-François du Lac, Brother Irénée, Director of Novices; Pierre Bernard, Brother Martin, shoemaker; Charles de Haulterive, Brother Zacharie, in charge of the dining room and

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58. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 416.

59. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 201.

60. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 221; Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 371.

61. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, pp. 417–418.

the infirmary; Jean Duyege, Brother Onésime (not the notorious one mentioned at the end of chapter four)), in charge of the storeroom and the linen; Jacques du Bois, Brother Fabien, cook; Louis Sceillier, Brother Gervais, gardener; Alexandre Boucher, Brother Claude, gardener; Edme Thomas Rivois [Rivot], Brother Hilaire, doorkeeper and tailor; Laurent de Douay, Brother Mathias, sacristan; Jacques Canappe, Brother Quentin; Pascal de La Truite, Brother Sixte; Albin Bouché, Brother Stanislas—all of whom had a part in the purchase of the said house.

Some of these Brothers may have also been teaching in the boarding school of Saint Yon, which began in 1705.

In the same document, Barthélemy explains that Saint Yon is intended for the use of the other twenty-one communities of the Brothers and that 2,340 livres of the price paid was contributed by several of these communities, which he names. The document also commissions nine Brothers as a sort of executive committee for the Institute to act in the name of all the Brothers in the event of any need: Barthélemy, Thomas, Jean, Joseph, Fiacre, Michel (Director of Rouen), Irénée, François, and Dosithée.<sup>62</sup>

Another major decision Barthélemy had to make concerned a proposal made by “a very zealous man [M. Charon], one of the founders of a hospital in Canada,” to bring four Brothers to organize a school for the native Indians.<sup>63</sup> In the beginning, De La Salle expressed his approval of the plan. As early as 1700, he had helped the Sulpicians prepare a teacher for their school in Montreal; this was done by Brother Nicolas Vuyart between October 1700 and April 1701.<sup>64</sup> Charon received letters patent for the Canadian project from the king in February 1718,<sup>65</sup> and Barthélemy wrote to Brother Gabriel on 18 February 1718, “It seems very likely that we will soon have a foundation in Canada.”<sup>66</sup>

The contract with Charon was signed on 26 June 1718 by the Brothers of Saint Yon, including Barthélemy, and by Brother Jean, the Assistant, from Paris—altogether seventeen signatures.<sup>67</sup> Probably around that time, Barthélemy called Brother Joseph, the Assistant, from Reims in order to work on the selection of the Brothers for the

62. *Ibid.*, p. 417, note 3.

63. Blain, 2, book 3, chap. 16, *Cahiers lasalliens* 8, p. 153.

64. *Cahiers lasalliens* 48, pp. 310ff.

65. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 203.

66. *Letters*, 32(a).6.

67. *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 203.

project. The payment for the voyage to Canada was made. Everything was set for their departure.

Brother Joseph, about to return to Reims after helping the Superior, stopped in to say good-bye to De La Salle and was surprised to hear the Founder exclaim, "My God, what are you doing?" At about this very moment, Barthélemy also came into the room, and De La Salle repeated his remark without further explanation. Such was the respect that they had for De La Salle's intervention that their decision was revoked, the project was called off, and the four Brothers were left in their communities. As it turned out, Charon admitted that he had planned to separate the four Brothers, sending each to a different rural parish, which would have been the ruin of their community life and probably their perseverance as Brothers.

Early in 1718, the Brothers in Chartres suffered from legal attacks by the writing masters, who were able to get the town to prohibit the Brothers from accepting any student whose family was not registered on the official list of the poor. The town edict, dated 19 February 1718, also limited to four the number of Brothers that would be allowed in the school and required that the cross and the name, *École Chrétienne*, be taken down from the front of the building. Barthélemy consulted with De La Salle at the Seminary of Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet, who advised that such an action could not have been taken by the town without circumventing or obtaining agreement from the bishop, since the school was under his authority. In fact, when Bishop de Mérinville learned what had happened, he brought the matter before the Parliament of Paris, which overturned the town injunction on 31 January 1719. No doubt Barthélemy during the interim visited the Brothers in Chartres to encourage them during that difficult time.

Blain<sup>68</sup> says that Barthélemy made frequent visits to Paris and Reims to consult with his two Assistants, apparently preferring to go to them rather than have them be absent from their responsibilities for the communities and schools under their direction. He probably tried to visit all the communities during 1718 and early 1719, though we have no documentary or biographical record of these visits.

Early in 1719, it became clear that the Founder's health had declined seriously. Two incidents aggravated his condition. In the first, he fell backward and hit his head on the floor when one of the residents at Saint Yon inadvertently removed the chair behind him. In another incident, a door fell on his head, causing a serious wound and severe headaches. On 3 April 1719, De La Salle made out his will. The

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68. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 22.

previous year, on 11 August and 5 September 1718, he had turned over to Barthélemy all his books and the legal documents related to the houses of the Institute.

Barthélemy was with him during his last days—on Ash Wednesday, when the Founder received Viaticum, and on Holy Thursday, when he received the Anointing of the Sick. Some of the Brothers kept vigil with the Founder throughout the night and early morning of Good Friday. It was sometime early on Friday, 7 April, that Barthélemy asked De La Salle if he accepted his suffering and death, the question that brought forth the final words of the Founder, “I adore God guiding me in all the happenings of my life” (*J’adore en toutes choses la conduite de Dieu à mon égard*).<sup>69</sup> He died at about four o’clock Good Friday morning.

Lucard<sup>70</sup> records that Barthélemy called on an artist that morning to make a portrait of De La Salle dressed in his priestly vestments, lying in the coffin. It has become one of the three authentic sources for the subsequent portraits of the Founder.<sup>71</sup>

Surely no one felt the loss of De La Salle more than Barthélemy. But his role now required that he be the primary support among all the Brothers. He wrote to all the communities, including in his letter the first part of the Founder’s last will and testament.

Typical, perhaps, is the letter he wrote to Gabriel Drolin on Easter Thursday:

Rouen, 13 April 1719

My very dear Brother,

The grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with us. It is with great sorrow that I write to you this second letter to let you know of the death of our very dear Father, which took place on Good Friday at about four o’clock in the morning, after he had received the last sacraments of the Church, much to the edification of those present. He had been ill all through Lent.

All Rouen mourns his passing and regards him as a saint. Crowds came to see his body on Friday and Saturday until his burial took place. I hope that you will send a short reply to my last letter [asking Gabriel’s acceptance of the decisions of the General Assembly and giving him news].

69. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 18, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 174.

70. Lucard, *Vie du Vénérable Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, 2, p. 270.

71. Cahiers lasalliens 49, pp. 49, 56, 65.

The Archbishop of Rouen and the First President have graciously offered us their patronage. I commend myself to your good prayers, and I am, with all my heart, in Jesus and Mary, my very dear Brother,

Your very humble and devoted servant,

(signed) Brother Barthélemy

P. S. I consider it my duty to send you the first part of our very dear Father's will, which concerns all the Brothers of our Society. It is the last instructions and directives he gave us.<sup>72</sup>

There follows that part of the will: the offering to God of himself and all the Brothers of the Institute "to whom he has united me," the recommendation of entire submission to the Church, especially to the pope, of great devotion to Jesus, love for Holy Communion and prayer, special devotion to Mary and Saint Joseph, union among the Brothers, and obedience to superiors.

Barthélemy also wrote letters of consolation to other individual Brothers, of which one example, a good illustration of his style, has been preserved:

My very dear Brother,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord be with us. It has not been without great cause that you have shed tears after learning of the death of our dear Father; I do not think that any of our Brothers has been able to keep his eyes from crying, that being so natural.

After everything has been considered, it is necessary to state that this has been the holy will of God, who having given him to us for as long a time as it pleased him, has taken him away from us to reward him for the work and the holiness of his life; it is necessary for us to submit and conform ourselves to his divine will.

The holy Apostles of Our Lord were also very saddened to be deprived of the tangible presence of their divine Master, who to console them said, "It is useful to you that I go, for if I do not go, the Holy Spirit will not come upon you."

Our very dear Father has not been lost; he is, as far as we can judge, among the saints in heaven; he is able to do much in the presence of God, since he obtained so much grace for himself and for so many souls whom he helped to change their lives and give themselves to God.

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72. *Letters*, 32(b).

We admire his great virtues, his angelic purity, his great care of the ornaments of the Church and of priestly vestments, for which he spared no cost, his great generosity toward the poor, although he himself was in great need along with us Brothers, his zeal for the salvation of souls, which led him to take the first step of exchanging his canonry with a pastor in order to have an opportunity to exercise his zeal, his humility, patience, and obedience, his great surrender to Divine Providence, and his many other heroic virtues.

I believe he is in the rank of virgins, from what I have learned from his conduct regarding chastity and virginity.

No, my very dear Brother, I do not wish to ask the good God to take you from this world. I will ask him with all my heart that he keep you here as long as it will please him for his glory, for the salvation of souls, and for your greater good. I forbid you to die, except to your own will and to your own spirit.

Our dear Father did not die without permission. I think that he would have died a long time ago, if he had had permission. Do not be sad, then, inappropriately, because the one you are grieving as dead is living and is in peace which no one could ever take from him. Be at peace, preserve the intimate union that he recommended to us and the practice of the other virtues. Do not sadden the Spirit of Our Lord, who is in you, by your excessive sorrow about our dear Father.

I do not know how I feel: I am sad and joyful at the same time. The fragrance I sense from his holy life, joined to the memory of the many extraordinary happenings at the time of and in connection with his death, consoles me. Be, then, more happy, because sadness which does not come from the Holy Spirit is dangerous and brings troublesome consequences.<sup>73</sup>

After the Founder's death, one of the first things to take up Barthélemy's attention was the tension between the Brothers in the north and Bishop Pierre de Langle, whose Boulogne diocese included Calais, over the issue of Jansenism and the appeal of some bishops (called appellants) against the Bull *Unigenitus* condemning Jansenism. De La Salle had become involved in January of the year he died, when the dean of the Calais diocese, Pierre Caron, told the Brothers that their Founder was among those appealing the pope's decision; the dean had seen the name of Jean-Louis de La Salle (the Founder's

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73. *Vie du Frère Barthélemy*, pp. 156–157.

brother) on the list of appellants and thought it was De La Salle himself. This had evoked the Founder's letter of 28 January 1719, written to Brother Norbert, Director of Calais, refuting the dean's statement.<sup>74</sup>

The letter was probably meant to guide Norbert as much as offset any public confusion. Félix-Paul suggests that De La Salle had called Norbert back to Rouen to be under his closer supervision. In any case, Norbert was at Saint Yon in April when the Founder died, and he signed the certificate of burial.<sup>75</sup> Evidently, once De La Salle was no longer present, Norbert created a problem, for the *Catalogue* indicates that he was dismissed from the Institute in 1720.<sup>76</sup> Rigault says that the reason for his dismissal is not known.<sup>77</sup> Félix-Paul surmises, and Gallego is inclined to agree with him, that theological quarreling may have been the reason.<sup>78</sup> Norbert may have never lost his tendency to resist authority.

Probably in May or June 1719, Bishop de Langle wrote Barthélemy that he could no longer tolerate the Brothers and that he wanted them removed from Calais and Boulogne, a letter which Blain says he saw and considered to be abusive and bitter. Barthélemy responded to the bishop in these words:

My Lord,

I have received the letter with which your lordship has favored me. You inform me that you are very displeased with our Brothers of Calais and Boulogne and have given orders forbidding them to carry out their work in the schools. This information grieves me very much, seeing that I have tried to implement the instructions you were pleased to give me about changing some of the Brothers and forbidding all to communicate with S. N. or to meddle in any way with Church matters, such being the exclusive concern of their lordships, the bishops, and the other ecclesiastical authorities. This was something our Founder himself, M. de La Salle, of happy memory, insisted upon very much.

However, our Brothers of Calais and of Boulogne have told me that they have done nothing of all the things they were accused of by people with prejudiced minds and that those persons who told your vicar-general that the Brothers had been disrespectful

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74. *Letters*, 132.

75. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 299, note 5.

76. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 35.

77. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 28.

78. Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, p. 298; Gallego, *Vida y Pensamiento*, p. 579.

toward your lordship and to other reverend personages had uttered calumnies.

For these reasons, my lord, I most humbly beg you to deign once more to show indulgence to those of our Brothers who are in your diocese who may have failed in any way in their duty to your lordship. We, for our part, will endeavor to make sure that these Brothers will henceforth give your lordship reason to be well content with their conduct.

I have the honor to be, with the utmost gratitude and the most profound respect,

Your lordship's very humble servant,

(signed) Brother Barthélemy

This humble and courteous response mollified the bishop to the extent that for the time being, he withdrew his plan.

On 29 July 1719, Barthélemy went to Saint-Omer on foot, despite the hot weather, in order to sign an agreement with Bishop François de Valbelle de Tournes to provide four Brothers for two schools: one near the cathedral, the other for the parish of Sainte Marguerite. The buildings, however, were not ready, so the Brothers did not start until the following year, 16 October 1720. Barthélemy had died by that time, so he did not see the opening of the school which he had authorized. The four Brothers who began the school were Bernardin, the Director, Clément, Hyacinthe, and Zosime.

While he was in the north to negotiate the contract with the bishop of Saint-Omer, Barthélemy made a visit to the Brothers in Calais. Bishop Pierre de Langle was not pleased with the Brothers' resistance to his Jansenist position. He was especially angry that the Brothers would neither attend Mass in their parish nor go to confession to the priests of the diocese. They actually went to Saint-Omer, whose bishop and priests were loyal to Rome.

At one point, the dean, M. Pierre Caron, representing Bishop de Langle, asked Barthélemy to remove the Director, Brother Anastase, who, he felt, was leading the Brothers of the community in their opposition to the bishop's desires. Barthélemy responded that he could remove the Brother, but he could not replace him; this response put an end to the effort to have the Director changed. The school was too popular with the people and the town magistrates for the bishop to push his cause.<sup>79</sup>

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79. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 24.

From Calais, Barthélemy went to visit the Brothers in Boulogne, who were facing the same problems with the same bishop. He did not go to see the bishop but stayed three days in Boulogne, encouraging the Brothers in their fidelity to the Holy See and to the advice that the Founder always gave in dealing with Jansenism. He was greatly encouraged himself by the support of the officials of the town and of the parents who were sending their children to the Brothers' school.

The Brothers up north, however, were not spared a kind of persecution. Even their stipends were being delayed or withheld completely, and they were threatened with the loss of their community house. Barthélemy, once alerted, went to Paris to get help from a loyal friend of the Brothers, the Duke de Béthune-Charost, governor of Calais. On 5 May 1720, the Superior wrote to Brother Anastase, the Director, a letter which deals with a number of the everyday community problems as well as with his efforts to cope with the persecution the Brothers were enduring for their loyalty to the pope:

My very dear Brother,

The grace and peace of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with us forever. I had the honor of seeing the Duke de Béthune-Charost yesterday. He promised me that he was going to give an immediate order for the payment of the stipends. He has to leave without delay for the waters [his spa treatments], and in about six weeks he hopes to return, terminate several important matters, and provide a house for our Brothers. Keep this point secret, please, except for the former and new mayors, and the president, if he is in Calais. I also had the honor to speak with the duke about the stopping of the payment of the rent of 100 écus of M. Ponton; he had the goodness to assure me on all these items. I admire the very great humility of this fine person and his great goodness, charity, and piety. I tell you that I am embarrassed by the remarkable proofs of his affection for our Society, and so forth. I ask you to give assurance of my humble regard to the president and the mayors. . . .

Do not allow Brother Hilarion to go to Holy Mass with the pupils. If you think that this Brother cannot possibly remain in Calais until the vacation period, we must exchange him with a Brother from Boulogne, probably Brother Tite, who is the best behaved of the young Brothers; he does very well in class. This will be hard on our Brothers, but what else can we do?

I am going to write to our dear Brother Rigobert [Director of Boulogne]. If he finds it no great problem, he will carry this out without delay; in that case, I ask you to receive Brother Tite in place of Brother Hilarion and to send Brother Hilarion to Boulogne as a new assignment to replace Brother Tite, with an obedience which you will give him in my name. This will be Monday of Pentecost for the one and Tuesday for the other, for the convenience of the schools.

We shall think about what can be done with Brother Marcel when the vacation comes; he does not like to work at all with young children, for one reason or another. You could give him the care of the second class until further notice. In any case, Brother Tite is well organized and is very humble and very obedient. You can place him wherever you wish, except in the top class, but for good reason it will be better for Brother Marcel to have the second class. From now until vacation, Brother Cassien will train him to take over the top class. We will see where it will be best to place Brother Hilarion in Boulogne; we could not change Brother Joachim at present.

I greet our dear Brothers, and I am with all my heart in the love of Jesus and Mary, my very dear Brother, your humble and very loving servant,

(signed) Brother Barthélemy

P. S. I forgot to tell you in my last letter that when the dean of Calais once asked me [before the Founder's death] to visit our Brothers and encourage them to go to confession in their parish, I told him I had a number of things to do that prevented me, and so forth; that further, M. de La Salle would be incomparably better than I, that he had asked the bishop for permission to confess our Brothers during his visit, that as soon as he responded, I would ask M. de La Salle to go there. I have not yet received an answer to this letter, and it is too late now to receive it. . . .

Brother Romuald apparently did not know all these circumstances, nor several others, since he made people think that I leaned toward the side of the appellants, which was false and unjust. All the Brothers of the Institute knew this very well, because I told them immediately after the death of our dear Father.

I could not allow anyone to accuse me on this matter, but nevertheless I do not think I am required to speak and to cry out heedlessly and make a big display, as Brother Romuald wanted to

do by getting involved in making a catechism on the matters of the moment, and so forth, which can never be appropriate for any Brother of our Society. They should keep silent rather than get involved with the details of the matter, which are beyond their ability.

What the Brothers should do is to make known their attachment and submission to the Holy See and the Church very plainly and teach the doctrine of the catholic, apostolic, and Roman Church in a catechetical manner.

Brother Romuald wants to be more learned than I, M. de La Salle, and M. Leschassier, Superior of the Grand Seminary in Paris, and so on, and to take no regard of our advice on the subject.<sup>80</sup>

In reviewing the manuscript of this chapter, Brother Edwin Bannon pointed out that there is no record of the Brother Cassien mentioned in this letter. One entered in 1713 but left before 1717, for he is not on the record of Barthélemy's visit to the communities. It is possible that another Brother Cassien had entered after the first one left and was not inscribed in the *Catalogue* of the Brothers; two Brothers on the community documents made during Brother Barthélemy's visits of 1716 and 1717 are not in the *Catalogue*. It is also possible, but improbable, that Barthélemy had a lapse of memory and misnamed the Brother in question.

Blain says that Barthélemy actually drew up a sort of memoir on the topic of Jansenism so that the Brothers and their students, when pressured to state their position, could do so in brief and clear responses.<sup>81</sup> The Superior encouraged them to limit their answers in this way and not to get involved in lengthy conversations.

After returning from the north, Barthélemy visited the community in Laon, where Brother André was Director. An effort had been made to force the Brothers out of their residence and school, but the pastor of the old Saint Pierre and the bishop of Laon intervened and got the local governor to stop the action. A better building, in fact, was actually arranged for the school and the community. Barthélemy came to see the Brothers' new location and to thank the pastor.

During his visit he also had to deal with Brother René (whose story has been told at the end of chapter four), who had become involved in providing secret medical remedies to people of the town. He was visiting people contrary to the Director's orders; possibly as

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80. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 24–28.

81. Blain, *Abrégé* (Summary), Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 34.

cook, he was left alone a good part of the day while the rest of the community was in school, and he added the visits to his shopping for food. Barthélemy stepped in, sent the Brother to Saint Yon, and planned to assign him to another community. But the Brother had become infatuated with his medical career and chose to leave the Institute. Unfortunately, once he left the Brothers, his medical clientele left him, and he ended up being killed by some neighboring shepherds, for reasons that are not clear.<sup>82</sup>

Barthélemy also visited the Brothers of Chartres in order to thank the bishop, Charles-François de Mérinville, and the ecclesiastical superior, M. de Truchis, for their help when the writing masters brought the Brothers to court, forcing them to remove the cross and the sign *École Chrétienne* from over the door of the school. The bishop had Brother Hubert write a statement of defense, which he brought before the Parliament, and on 31 January 1719, a decree was issued restoring the privileges which the local court had taken away.

Back in Saint Yon, Barthélemy approved plans to expand the property, to construct a chapel, and to publish *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, which had been prepared by Brother Timothée.

For some time the Superior was aware of his own declining health. While in Paris earlier, he had spoken openly with the Brothers about his death. On one occasion while at recreation with them, he took a handful of dirt and reflected that such material could be the remains of their family members. He added, "Soon we will resemble what remains of them."

He was not back at Saint Yon long before he fell ill. It was more than the exhaustion from his traveling, which he had done mostly on foot, or from his work of administration. On 6 June 1720, he wrote to his two Assistants, Joseph Le Roux in Reims and Jean Jacquot in Paris, to alert them, but within a day he had become so weak that he requested the last sacraments. He died peacefully in the early morning of 8 June 1720. Brothers Irénée, Dosithée, and other Brothers of Saint Yon were with him. The pastor of Saint Sever presided at the funeral, and Barthélemy was buried next to the Founder in the chapel of Sainte Susanne.<sup>83</sup> He had been the Superior for forty-nine months.

The two Brother Assistants hurried to Rouen but were unable to be present in time for the funeral. Together they composed a letter to all the Brothers:

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82. *Ibid.*, p. 113; Félix-Paul, *Les Lettres de Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle*, pp. 207–208.

83. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 1, p. 422, note 1.

To all our dear Brothers in Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Greetings! The precious death in the eyes of the Lord of our dear most honored Brother Barthélemy, Superior, happened on 8 June at four o'clock in the morning, fortified and strengthened by all the sacraments, which he received with full consciousness and holy dispositions. This obliges us to write to you at this time to bear witness to you of the deep and piercing sorrow that we feel at so great a loss, which is, if we can speak this way, irreparable, if God's hand were not with us, making us feel the touch of his divine mercy, giving us himself a successor who can follow in the steps of our deceased.

We can say with truth that the hand of the Lord has struck us very painfully, depriving us of such a worthy leader whose life and death have been for us the source of very great edification; you are all witnesses of that, very dear Brothers. Allow us, then, to say that we must adore the impenetrable secrets and judgments of God, putting before our eyes these words of Job: "The Lord has given him to us; now he has taken him from us; may his holy name be blessed."

Brother Barthélemy was always entirely and perfectly submissive to the will of God in his illness, abandoning himself absolutely to God for time and for eternity. Nevertheless, on the eve of his death, after receiving all the sacraments, he experienced severe temptations to despair, which made him suffer a great deal, but by the mercy of God, five or six hours before dying, he came through these temptations perfectly and gave assurance that he had no part at all in what he had said during those troubled moments over which he had no control, and he gave very true and clear signs of perfect conformity to God's good pleasure and a great confidence in his goodness and mercy.

He even said in the presence of four of our dear Brothers, some hours before dying, that he had seen the Most Blessed Virgin with M. de La Salle, our dear Father, and that they had spoken to him. He was not able to say more, entering immediately into a kind of coma until his last breath, which he breathed with such great calm that we have reason to believe that his soul was enjoying interiorly a peaceful repose.

Now, then, very dear Brothers, that God has taken him to himself, it only remains for us to lift our eyes and our prayers to the Lord for the repose of his soul, that God will grant him mercy

and deliver him from the fires of purgatory, if he is still detained there.

For ourselves, though distant from one another, let us unite heart and spirit together, even as the Christians of the early Church, to ask the Lord day and night with tears and grieving, by ardent prayers and frequent communion, as the holy Apostles did for the election of Saint Mathias, that God may make known the one he has chosen and destined to succeed Brother Barthélemy. Let us not be deterred, very dear Brothers, by all the vain titles of honor, seniority, age, or position, but try to discover by the help of the light of the Holy Spirit the one he has chosen to guide us during this mortal life in justice and holiness, through which we will merit to obtain eternal glory.

Saint Yon, 16 June 1720.

## Brother Timothée

Brother Barthélemy's successor as Superior was Brother Timothée (Guillaume Samson-Bazin), who was born in Paris on 29 January 1682 and entered the Institute on 24 January 1700.<sup>84</sup> Little is known about his family, except that his father was probably a tailor in Paris.<sup>85</sup> The earliest record of Timothée as a Brother is from his own testimony that he was cured of a tumor on his knee by the blessing of De La Salle in 1702:

I, the undersigned, Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, certify to whom it may concern that in the year 1702, I had a serious tumor on my knee from which an incision resulted in the issue of a large quantity of pus. This gave me great concern because, following my year of novitiate and a few months training in class, I had been assigned to go from Paris to teach school in Chartres. In this difficulty M. de La Salle came to see me as I lay in bed, and I asked him to bless my knee, which he did with his thumb. I left [for Chartres] on foot with some ointments, which I did not use, and I felt no pain, for my knee was completely cured. I attributed this and have always attributed this to the prayers and merits of M. John Baptist de La Salle, our Founder. In faith of which I have signed.

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84. Cahiers lasalliens 3, p. 37.

85. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 44.

Done at Rouen this 3 April 1742.

(signed) Brother Timothée<sup>86</sup>

On 3 June 1703, Timothée made perpetual vows,<sup>87</sup> the same year that Brother Barthélemy entered the Institute, on 10 February.

After his stay in Chartres, Timothée's next assignment of record was in Mende in 1710 as Director, and he was there when De La Salle made his first trip south in 1711.<sup>88</sup> In December 1712, he was called to Marseille by De La Salle to be the Director of the novitiate,<sup>89</sup> but this assignment was of short duration because of the change of attitude toward the Brothers by the leaders of the city who were sponsoring the parish schools. The novitiate closed in the spring of 1713, and Timothée sought out De La Salle for a new assignment.

It was either at the monastery of Saint Maximin, not far from Marseille, according to Maillefer<sup>90</sup> or, according to Blain, in Mende that Timothée caught up with the Founder:

After the pious Founder had stayed for some time at the hermitage of which we have spoken [the monastery of Saint Maximin], he retired to another solitude in the town of Mende. The servant of God, hidden from the eyes of people, believed that they would think of him no more than he would think of them; because he would forget them, he convinced himself that he would be forgotten by them. But he was not a little surprised when he saw the Brother Director come to his new solitude, the Brother to whom he had given the direction of the novitiate [in Marseille]. The Director had left there because there were no more novices, and he had nothing else to do. The absence of De La Salle had succeeded in emptying the house. His enemies, as we have said, had destroyed the vocation of those whom they had called there.

It was to inform his Superior and be consoled with him and to ask for a new assignment that this good Brother had come to find him. The news did not surprise the holy priest; he was prepared for it. What amazed him was that anyone would still be thinking of him. So, being a man who thought that remembrance of him had been wiped off the face of the earth, he told the

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86. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

87. *Cahiers lasalliens* 3, p. 18.

88. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 374.

89. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

90. Maillefer, *Cahiers lasalliens* 6, p. 211; *Two Early Biographies*, p. 155.



Brother Timothée, Guillaume Samson-Bazin (1682–1752), second Superior (1720–1751) of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Portrait in the Chapter Hall of the Generalate in Rome. *Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle: Iconographie, 1979, slide 318, plate 153–2).*



Brother Timothée, Guillaume Samson-Bazin (1682–1752), second Superior (1720–1751) of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Portrait in the Chapter Hall of the Generalate in Rome. *Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 318, plate 153–2).*

Brother, "God be blessed, my dear Brother. Alas, how is it you come to me? Don't you know well my inability to govern others? Aren't you aware that several Brothers seem to want no more of me and that these words of the Gospel seem to be said for me? '*Nolumus hunc regnare super nos*; we do not want this man any longer for our Superior.'" The Brother was confused, edified, and moved by these remarks, and he showed in his face all the feelings in his soul; leaving his eyes to speak for his mouth, he said by his tears all that his heart wanted to say.<sup>91</sup>

Blain typically reads the mind of De La Salle quite freely, but he is probably correct in most of his facts about this encounter. He goes on to say that Timothée had first gone to the community house in Mende, where he learned that there was no room for him and that for the same reason, De La Salle was staying with Madame Saint Denis. Blain also says that Timothée insisted on getting a new assignment from De La Salle.<sup>92</sup> He does not say what this was, but it is clear that the Founder assigned Timothée to Avignon as Director and as Visitor for the southern communities to replace Brother Ponce.<sup>93</sup>

The accuracy of this account has the merit that Blain's biography was written at the request of Brother Timothée, probably with some help from Timothée. But there is at least one other incident which involves Timothée that makes Rigault wonder how much control Timothée exercised over the facts recorded by Blain.<sup>94</sup> This incident will be mentioned later.

It was to Timothée in Avignon that De La Salle sent Brother Irénée for further training in 1714.<sup>95</sup> De La Salle also makes reference to Timothée's presence in Avignon in his letter to Gabriel Drolin in 1716:

You can write to me as often as you wish. I have confidence that the Brother who is now in charge at Avignon will faithfully forward your letters to me. He is a very discreet man. I will answer them.<sup>96</sup>

There is an implied comparison here between Timothée and Ponce.

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91. Blain, 2, book 3, chap. 11, Cahiers Lasalliens 8, p. 98.

92. Ibid., pp. 98-99.

93. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 378.

94. Ibid., 2, p. 43.

95. Ibid., 1, p. 423.

96. *Letters*, 32.4.

Timothée was still in Avignon on 10 January 1717, when Brother Barthélemy made his visit there,<sup>97</sup> and as Director of Avignon, he went to the General Assembly in 1717, when Barthélemy was elected Superior.<sup>98</sup> One of the early assignments by the new Superior was to ask Timothée to supervise the publication of *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*.<sup>99</sup> This was a convenience, since the printer was located in Avignon, but it was also a recognition of Timothée as a good school man who over the years had probably contributed much to the writing of *The Conduct*.

Timothée, as Director of Avignon, went to the Assembly in 1720, when he himself was elected Superior.<sup>100</sup> Blain says that Barthélemy picked Timothée as his successor. In his biography of De La Salle, Blain says:

A canon [Blain himself], a friend of the Institute who enjoyed Brother Barthélemy's confidence and whom the Brother had chosen for his last confession when he realized he was in danger of death, had taken care to ask him which of the Brothers he considered best qualified to replace him. The dying Superior had indicated Brother Timothée, at that time Director of the house in Avignon, and had added that Brother Timothée was the one who, also in De La Salle's opinion, deserved to be chosen and that the saintly Founder might have picked him to take his place, even during his life, if Brother had been a little longer in the Society. In fact, he was at this time only a neophyte in the Community, so to speak, but his prudence, his even temper, his good spirit, his kind, gracious, and courteous ways had drawn the Founder's eyes on him and merited his being chosen to succeed him some day.<sup>101</sup>

This is the incident that makes Rigault wonder if Brother Timothée did exercise that much influence on Blain's writing; among other things, Timothée was in the Institute three years before Barthélemy entered.

In any case, Timothée was unanimously elected at a one-day Assembly on 7 August 1720.<sup>102</sup> Other decisions taken at the Assembly were that the delegates to Assemblies would be the Directors of the

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97. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 185.

98. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 1, p. 410.

99. Cahiers lasalliens 40/1, p. 324, note 1.

100. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 41ff.

101. Blain, vol. 2, book 3, chap. 19, Cahiers lasalliens 8, pp. 183–184.

102. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 43.

communities, which had been the practice in 1717 and 1720, that in case of need, the election of an Assistant could be done by mail ballot in order to eliminate the burden of travel, and that

regarding the heavy burden of mind and body on the dear Brother Superior of the Institute, he would take special care to preserve his health and follow the advice given him by the Brothers for this purpose, for the greater good of the Society, also that he would ordinarily travel by horse or coach.<sup>103</sup>

Timothée was a good administrator. It was under his guidance that the Institute received letters patent from the king in 1724 and the Bull of Approbation from the pope in 1725, both of which required considerable political maneuvering.

In 1725 Timothée convoked a General Chapter for the solemn reception of the Bull. Following its prescriptions, Timothée composed the Chapter of thirty Brothers: nineteen from the principal houses, nine from among the senior Brothers, and the two Assistants who had been elected in 1720, Jean Jacquot and Joseph Le Roux.

The Chapter began on 6 August with a retreat preached by two Jesuits and by some of the directors of the local seminary in Rouen. The Bull became the principal topic of the retreat and was received with extraordinary joy and gratitude by all the Brothers. Afterward, on the last day of the Chapter—15 August, as a mark of reverence for the Most Blessed Virgin on her feast of the Assumption—they made vows according to the prescriptions of the Bull. Timothée then deemed it proper to resign as Superior, and he was reelected unanimously. The two Assistants also resigned; Jean was replaced by Brother Irénée, and Joseph was reelected.<sup>104</sup>

The Bull of Approbation required the Brothers to add vows of poverty and chastity to the traditional vows of obedience, stability, and association to conduct schools gratuitously. The formula, in fact, is somewhat confusing, since the term association is not included in the final enumeration of the vows but only a vow of teaching gratuitously. The second paragraph of the formula, however, does make clear that the Brothers vow to unite themselves in order to conduct gratuitous schools together and by association. The General Chapter of 1986 remedied this lack of clarity by returning the wording of the vow in the final paragraph to its original meaning, that is, association for the service of the poor through education.

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103. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

104. *Ibid.*, pp. 107–110.

Thirty-two sessions were held to adjust the Rules and Constitutions of 1718 to the Bull of Approbation.<sup>105</sup> The Chapter then requested that the new Rule be published, which was accomplished the following year on 1 April 1726. Then, in 1727, Timothée sent two Brothers to Rome to thank the pope for the favor of the Church's approval of the Institute. The two Brothers also went to relieve Gabriel Drolin.<sup>106</sup> They were Brothers Fiacre, who stayed there, and Thomas, who went as a companion for Fiacre but returned shortly afterward. In 1730, with the approval of the pope, Timothée sent Brother Sylvestre to assist Brother Fiacre and eventually to replace him.<sup>107</sup>

In response to the desires of the General Chapter of 1725, Timothée also promoted the publication of the Founder's writings for the use of the Brothers in community and in their schools. *Collection of Various Short Treatises* (a reprint of the 1711 edition) was published in 1726; *The Duties of a Christian to God*, in 1727; *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* (for the schools), in 1729; *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* and (separately) *Meditations for Sundays and Feasts*, in 1730 (putative date), and *Instructions and Prayers for Holy Mass, Confession, and Communion*, in 1734. That would be quite a program for our day, to say nothing about the early eighteenth century.

It was Timothée, too, who asked that the life of the Founder be written by Brother Bernard and by Canon Blain, and when a few Brothers objected to some of the things that Blain wrote, Timothée wrote a defense of it.<sup>108</sup>

Timothée also began efforts to have De La Salle canonized. This is attested by certain expense items recorded in Saint Yon: under date of 1735, eleven copies of Blain's two volumes of the life of De La Salle were rebound by an Italian printer at twenty-five baiouques per volume. Two years later, another twenty volumes were rebound, evidently for the dignitaries of "the pope's court." Another item was twenty-five écus (seventy-five livres) for a copy of the instructions, articles, and questions necessary for the episcopal process concerning the holiness, virtues, and miracles of John Baptist de La Salle.<sup>109</sup> In May 1741, a copy of Blain's biography of the Founder was sent to Benedict XIV. Then, in 1742, Timothée himself certified to the miracle which has already been mentioned. This was only one of many similar testimonies which were gathered at that time.<sup>110</sup>

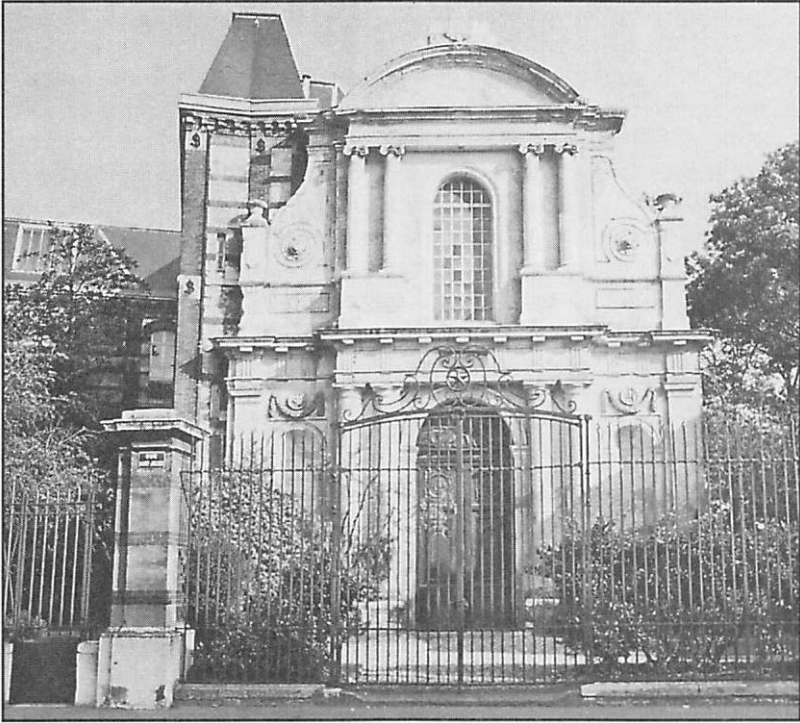
105. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

106. *Ibid.*, 1, p. 341.

107. *Ibid.*, 2, p. 181.

108. Cahiers lasalliens 8, final page, numbered as 4.

109. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 46.



Facade of the chapel of Saint Yon as it is today. Photo E. Rousset (*J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 206, plate 138*).

Several temporal steps were also taken by Timothée. To give the Brothers a secure dwelling in Paris, he purchased the building on the rue Neuve-Notre-Dame-des-Champs, known as the house (community) of the Holy Spirit;<sup>111</sup> he also acquired the house at Saint-Denis on the rue de Clos Fourré by a gift of Mme Marie Poignant;<sup>112</sup> he settled the financial obligation of Saint Yon to the pastor of Saint Sever by negotiating an annual fee of six livres<sup>113</sup> and securing the right to have a cemetery on the property of Saint Yon at the cost of ten livres.<sup>114</sup> More importantly, the building of a chapel on the property of Saint Yon was begun with the laying of two cornerstones on 7 June 1728.<sup>115</sup>

110. *Ibid.*

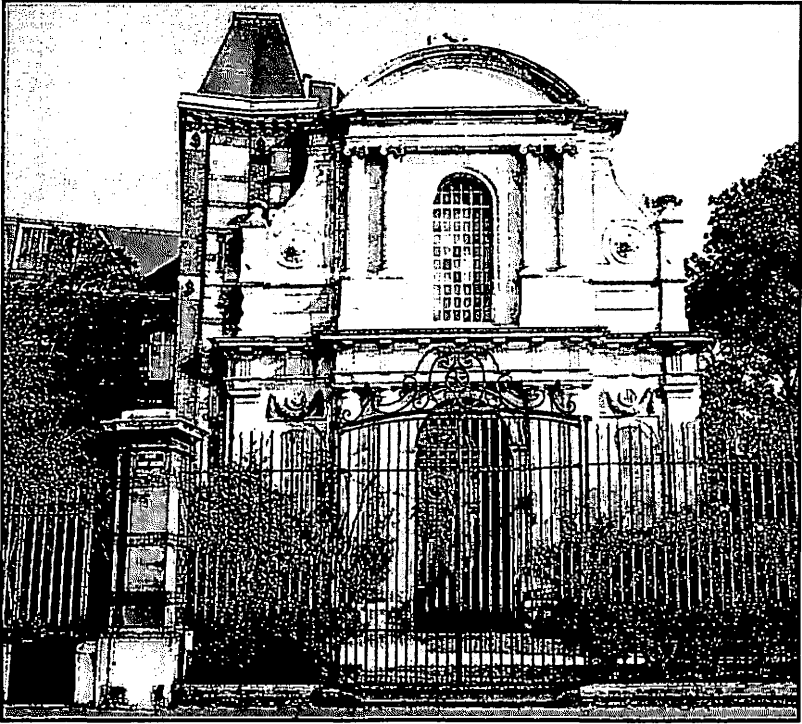
111. *Ibid.*, p. 56; *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 192, note 1.

112. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 55.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*, p. 127.



Facade of the chapel of Saint Yon as it is today. *Photo E. Rousset (J. B. de La Salle; Iconographie, 1979, slide 206, plate 138).*

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110. *Ibid.*

111. *Ibid.*, p. 56; *Cahiers lasalliens* 40/1, p. 192, note 1.

112. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 55.

113. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

114. *Ibid.*

115. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

Canon Blain ends his three books on the life of John Baptist de La Salle with a description of the work of the Brothers on the new chapel “dedicated to the Childhood of Our Lord under the invocation of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Blessed Virgin, of Saint Joseph, and of Saint Yon.”<sup>116</sup> One purpose of the new church was to house the remains of the Founder. This was finally accomplished on 16 July 1734 with great ceremony attended by the ecclesiastical and municipal authorities of Rouen and as many Brothers as were able to come for the event.

The Brothers who attended the ceremony stayed for a retreat during the last days of July. Then, with the consent of the Brothers, Timothée decided to anticipate the General Chapter scheduled for the following year, in order to minimize the expense and the fatigue of the travel involved. The Bull of Approbation had stipulated that a General Chapter be held every ten years, but it also authorized the Superior to make exceptions for good reasons. Forty-seven capitulants were present. At the start, the Chapter made this declaration:

Before all things, the General Chapter declares that it recognizes no duty or power to change, alter, or add to our holy Rules and Constitutions given to us by M. John Baptist de La Salle, our very venerable Founder, approved by our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XIII, and arranged conformably to the Bull of Approbation by the General Chapter of 1725.<sup>117</sup>

An important decision was made to have printed the first part of the Founder’s book, *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer*. Manuscript copies, and possibly a printed edition by De La Salle himself, had been available, but over the years they had become scarce. A less significant decision to safeguard the vows of poverty and of teaching gratuitously was taken: “No Brother would be admitted to vows who had not first completely given up the use of tobacco.” Also, the Chapter elected a new Assistant, Brother Étienne (Jean Pérotin), to replace Brother Dosithée (Claude Longière), who was becoming blind. Brother Irénée, the other Assistant, was reelected.<sup>118</sup>

During the six years following the Chapter of 1734, Timothée opened twenty-four schools under the direction of the Brothers:

1735— Bollène (Comtat-Venaissin), Dôle (Franche-Comté), Soissons (Île de France).

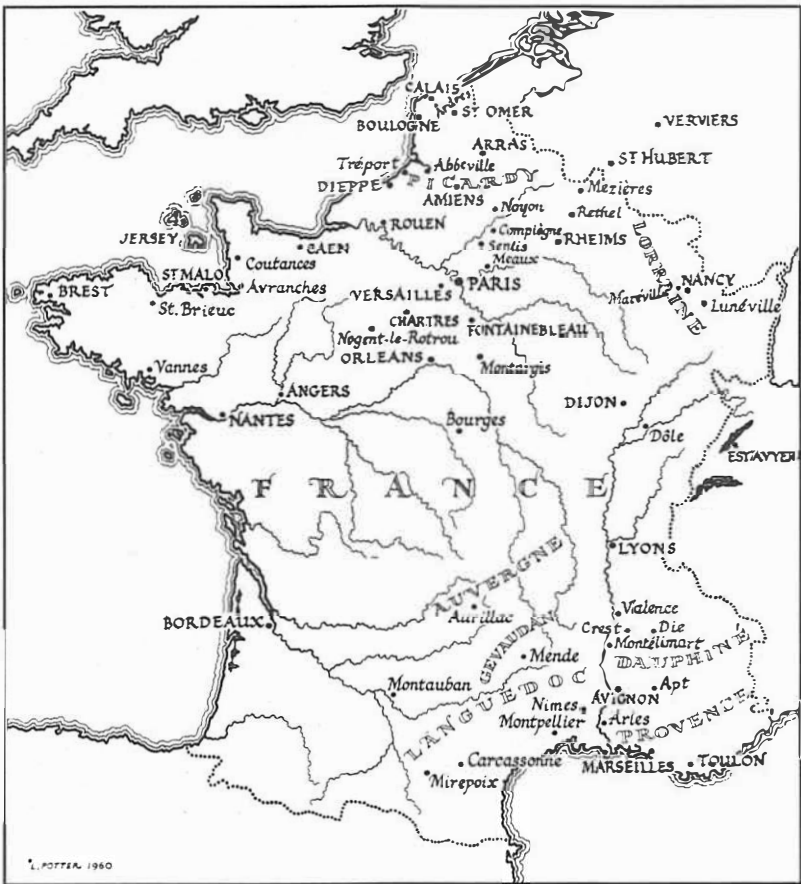
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116. *Ibid.*, p. 127; Blain, 2, book 3, chap. 19, Cahiers lasalliens 8, p. 193.

117. Lucard, *Annales de l’Institut*, 2, p. 66.

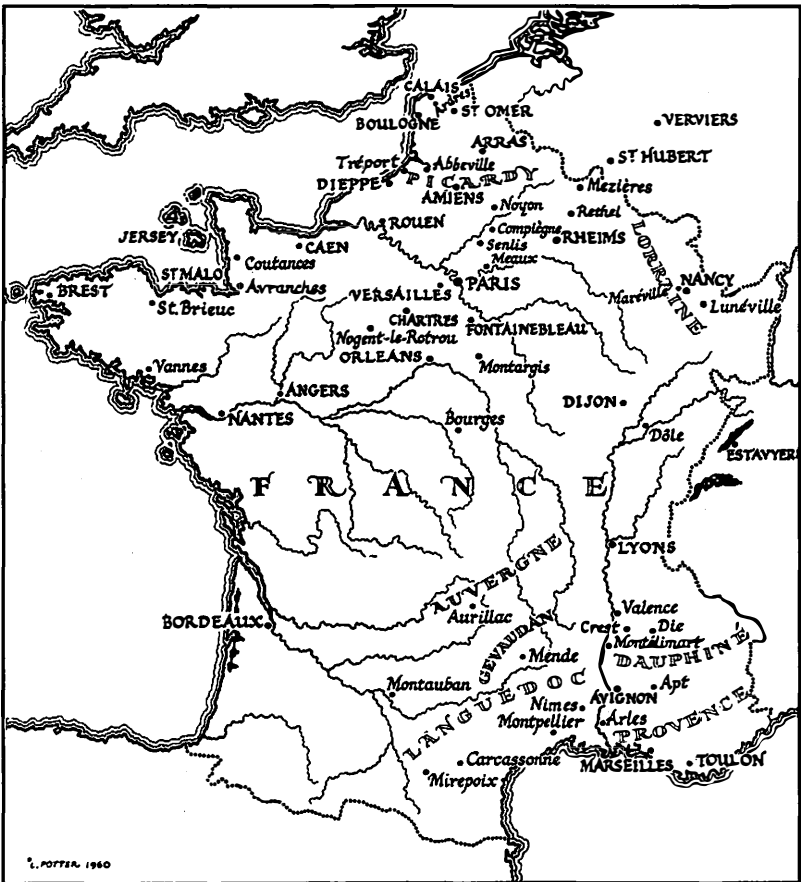
118. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, pp. 147–150.

- 1736— Croissic (Brittany), Die (Dauphiné), Bar-le-Duc (Lorraine), Vire (Normandie), Aix (Provence).  
 1737— Bourges (Berri), Paris (Sainte Madeleine).  
 1738— Rennes (Brittany), Reims (Saint Hilaire), La Fère (Île de France), Carcassone (Languedoc).  
 1739— Noyon (Île de France), Bourg-Saint-Andéol (Languedoc).  
 1740— Saillons (Champagne), Fontainebleau (Île de France), Orléans (Île de France), Saint Ambroix (Languedoc), Darnétal (Longpaon), Abbéville (Picardie), Arles (Provence), Mens (Dauphiné).



Location of Brothers' communities in the eighteenth century. Map reproduced with permission from Battersby, W. J., *History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Waldegrave, 1960).

- 1736— Croissic (Brittany), Die (Dauphiné), Bar-le-Duc (Lorraine), Vire (Normandie), Aix (Provence).
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- 1738— Rennes (Brittany), Reims (Saint Hilaire), La Fère (Île de France), Carcassone (Languedoc).
- 1739— Noyon (Île de France), Bourg-Saint-Andéol (Languedoc).
- 1740— Saillons (Champagne), Fontainebleau (Île de France), Orléans (Île de France), Saint Ambroix (Languedoc), Darnétal (Longpaon), Abbéville (Picardie), Arles (Provence), Mens (Dauphiné).



Location of Brothers' communities in the eighteenth century. Map reproduced with permission from Battersby, W. J., *History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Waldegrave, 1960).

Lucard lists twenty-three schools;<sup>119</sup> Rigault's description of the Brothers' arrival in Orléans in October 1740<sup>120</sup> adds one more to Lucard's list. These twenty-four schools were staffed by the Brothers—at the request of local pastors, bishops, municipal authorities, or charitable persons—as a result of the success of the work of the Brothers wherever they went. At least fifty-two Brothers, probably as many as seventy, would be required for the schools, so the popularity of the Brothers also meant a steady increase in the number of novices. To meet this need, Timothée opened additional novitiates at Avignon (1729) and later at Maréville (1751).

But to meet the urgent need for Brothers to staff the schools, the training of the novitiate may have been even less than the usual limited period of two or three months. It is no wonder that Irénée, as Director of Novices and Assistant visiting all of the communities, was concerned that the Brothers might become overworked, to the neglect of their ongoing educational and spiritual formation.

Relative to that problem are some data based on the *Catalogue*.<sup>121</sup> During the five-year period prior to the death of the Founder (April 1714 to April 1719), thirty-nine men entered the novitiate, and twenty-four (sixty-one percent) persevered; only one was sent away. During the five-year period after the election of Timothée (July 1720 to July 1725), seventy-one men entered the novitiate, and thirty-three (forty-six percent) persevered; as many as ten were sent away.

Eventually, during his thirty-one years as Superior, Timothée added a total of sixty schools staffed by the Brothers, all located in France except for one in Ferrara, Italy, in 1741, and one in Estavayer, Switzerland, in 1750. There was even an aborted attempt to start a school in Canada, which has been described in the account of the life of Brother Denis and of Brother Pacifique.

Several of these schools included boarders, such as at Saint-Omer (1725), Maréville (1749), and Marseille (1750), and in some cases these boarders included youngsters in need of social rehabilitation, as at Saint Yon. In these schools there was a payment for room and board, part of which was intended to help defray the costs of the novitiate and the care of the retired Brothers.

Rigault suggests that so much work merits for Brother Timothée the name of a great Superior and, in a way, that of second Founder of the Institute.<sup>122</sup>

119. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, p. 71.

120. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 234.

121. Cahiers lasalliens 3.

122. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 316.

Brother Timothée's experience as Superior, however, was not always free of trouble. An example is the case of Brother Polycarpe, whose story was briefly told in the last chapter under the name of Brother Alexandre. He had entered the Institute under an assumed name after having been dismissed several years earlier, and not being recognized, he was given the new name of Polycarpe. He must have been a seriously disturbed personality, but he had the skill and the malice to create real trouble by sending misinformation to the civil authorities about the way Timothée was governing the Institute, especially the management of the detention center for adults.

The King's Court was alerted, and the archbishop of Rouen was told to investigate the charges. The Brothers were very upset, and three Directors—Alexis in Boulogne, Germain in Calais, and Exupère in Saint-Omer—together with Raymond, a retired Director, wrote a letter to the archbishop on 26 July 1745:

We have learned with sorrow that some statements about our community of Saint Yon have disposed the vicars-general of Rouen against the Institute. . . .

Our Superior has governed our Institute for twenty-five years with wisdom and discretion. He is very faithful to the Rule and even in the great solemnities at Saint Yon prefers to stay with his community. He is a father in the midst of his family. He goes among outsiders only as a duty or as common courtesy requires of him in strict obligation. . . .

We have more than sixty communities in the kingdom, and there is not a single Brother in them who is not very pleased and happy with the conduct of our Superior.<sup>123</sup>

The archbishop made his visit to Saint Yon on 2 August and was pleased with what he found. On 12 August, he wrote a letter in which he said in part:

I have been edified by the discipline and the observance of your Rule which reigns in your community. I know of all the good you are doing in the schools confided to you and of the benefit you are to the public. These establishments, which are so beneficial, cannot be maintained without great obedience which the Brothers must have for their Superiors and the Directors of each community. I have no doubt that you are taking all the measures required to maintain this spirit, and you can count on my support

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123. Lucard, *Annales de l'Institut*, 2, pp. 162–163.

and protection. I owe this to your zeal and your good intentions, and I recommend myself to your prayers, asking you not to doubt, my very dear Brother, my kind regards for you.<sup>124</sup>

This letter, however, was delivered by one of the vicars-general along with several ordinances, the spirit of which was anything but respectful of the fact that the Institute was approved by the pope. An element of Gallicanism was expressed in an exaggerated authority of the local bishop over the internal operation of the Institute. Among other directives, the decisions of the Superior had to be approved by the archbishop. How much these ordinances came from the archbishop, whose letter gives no hint of them, or were the work of the vicars-general is not clear.

In any case, Brother Timothée was able to ignore what was inconsistent with the decisions of the Bull of Approbation. Besides, the accusations of Polycarpe were found to be false, and Timothée was vindicated. Poor Polycarpe had no alternative but to apply to Rome for a dispensation from his vows and leave the Institute a second time.

It was against the background of the encroachment of the episcopal bureaucracy in Rouen that Timothée and his Assistants were considering a move of their residence and the novitiate to Reims. A less private motive was the desire to make the location of the government of the Institute and the national meetings more central, reducing the fatigue and expense of travel for everyone. There was also a sentiment of respect for Reims as the birthplace of the Institute.

A letter of Brother Généreux, Director of the community in Reims, to Jules de Rohan, archbishop of Reims, expresses this sentiment and intention of the Superior:

Full of respect for the city where their Institute was born, the Superior . . . desires to make his residence with his Assistants here, to convoke the General Chapters here, and to provide a suitable place for the retired Brothers. . . . Since it is their duty to assist daily at Mass, and it would be very inconvenient for them to leave their residence, we request permission to open a chapel in our buildings on the rue Neuve. . . .<sup>125</sup>

Permission was readily granted in early 1745, and on 21 May, the new chapel was blessed by the pastor of Saint Jean, assisted by the pastors of Saint Maurice and Saint Étienne.

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124. Rigault, *Histoire générale*, 2, p. 308.

125. *Ibid.*, p. 299.

Timothée decided to hold the General Chapter of 1745 in Reims. The capitulants approved the transfer of the center of the Institute to Reims. There remained only the necessary negotiations with the municipal authorities. This was regrettable, because it was here that Timothée met with surprising opposition. The city officials placed so many restraints on the rights of the Brothers to their property in Reims and on their financial independence that the friends of the Brothers considered the arrangements to be nothing less than a kind of slavery.<sup>126</sup> As a consequence, Rouen continued to be the center of the Institute for another twenty-five years.<sup>127</sup>

Another challenge to Timothée at this time was the decision of several local governments to disregard any exemption of the Brothers' property from an annual assessment and other taxes on financial transactions. Timothée secured legal assistance and appealed to the Assembly of the Clergy in 1745. On 23 June, the Assembly voted to appeal to the king on behalf of the Brothers, and the royal decision was in favor of the Brothers' exemption from such taxes.

Yet another challenge, in 1750, concerned the letters patent for Saint Yon, in particular whether all the Brothers' properties in the kingdom were protected by these letters patent. Again, Timothée secured a favorable decision for the Brothers.<sup>128</sup>

Thirty-one years of coping with all the administrative demands on his energy took their toll on Brother Timothée, and his health had been failing quite seriously. In 1751 he decided to call for a General Chapter to choose his successor. The capitulants assembled at Saint Yon on 1 August. After one day of deliberation, they agreed to the election of a new Superior, and on 3 August, Brother Claude (Jean-Pierre Nivet) was elected. Brother Timothée survived only five months and was buried near the Founder in the Chapel of Saint Yon on 8 January 1752, just eleven days short of his seventieth birthday.<sup>129</sup>

It is doubtful if any other Brother had more influence on the history and development of the Institute than this great man.

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126. *Ibid.*, p. 313.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

128. *Ibid.*, pp. 143–146.

129. *Ibid.*, p. 317.

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