

A Religious Institute in Transition

The Story of Three General Chapters



The Chapel of Saint John Baptist de La Salle Generalate, Rome, Italy

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**The Story of
Three General Chapters**

Luke Salm, FSC

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Abbreviations

AMG	Archives of the Motherhouse, Rome
ANYD	Archives of the New York District
BFEC	Bulletin des Frères des Ecoles Chrésiennes
BSS	Bulletin of the 39th General Chapter, Second Ssssion
CIL	Centre International Lasallien
FSC	Fratres Scholarum Christianarum
GCNB	General Chapter News Bulletin (1966)
J-M	juxta modum
LI-NE	Long Island–New England District (Province)
PV	Procès-Verbal (Minutes in French)

Preface

There is an old Chinese curse: "May you live in a period of transition!" More than one author has used this phrase to describe what has happened during the last 25 years to religious life in general and to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in particular. But this period of transition can be viewed more positively if its various stages convey a sense of momentum, a realization that the De La Salle Christian Brothers not only have been through a great deal but also that they are going somewhere. This way of putting it can suggest that the history to be reviewed in the succeeding chapters is not intended as an exercise in nostalgia, a leisurely stroll down memory lane. It is hoped, rather, to find in the recent history of the Institute of the De La Salle Brothers some clues to understanding how far it has come and where it may be going.

It is not altogether true to say that the past is over and done with, or that the future has not yet come to be. In one sense the past is still something real in the present and the future is already here. As Richard Niebuhr put it, we have the response-ability, that is, the ability to respond to the past and to the future: to the past by reinterpreting it, to the future by redirecting it. The present moment, by its nature, is elusive. The transition the Institute is experiencing has meaning because it incorporates the past and prepares the way for the future.

The Lasallian Institute has faced the challenges of this transition in a special way in its last three General Chapters, the 39th, 40th, and 41st, held in 1966–1967, 1976, and 1986 respectively. As the ciphers indicate, these chapters are inheritors of a long tradition going back to the first assembly of the Brothers, called together in 1686 by the founder of the Institute, Saint John Baptist de La Salle. At that time the Institute was still in its formative stages. By the time the Founder called the next assembly, in 1694, the nature and the mission of the young Institute were sufficiently complete for that meeting to be considered the first General Chapter.

What is important in the tradition is not only its venerable character, but also the principle it represents. From the beginning, the Founder, priest, Doctor of Theology, and former cathedral canon that he was, nonetheless insisted that the Brothers, young and minimally educated as most of them were, have a determining voice in shaping the structure of the Society and its future course. In a moment of crisis,

their sense of association was strong enough for the early Brothers to order the Founder, by virtue of his vow to obey the "Body of the Society," to return from his retreat and resume his active superiorship. A major gain in the present transitional situation has been the recovery of this sense of the General Chapter as the privileged expression of the Body of the Society.

It will probably help the reader to know something about the author, at least to understand where the author is coming from, to use the common expression. I entered the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in 1940, a year before the American involvement in World War II that was to change so many things in the world, the Church, and the Institute. But the changes at that time were still far enough away for this young Brother to be trained and to experience religious life in the final decades of the pre-Vatican II era. I was fortunate to be the subject of an experiment, and was assigned to Catholic University in Washington to pursue a degree in theology in a program hitherto restricted to candidates for the priesthood. The theology was mostly scholastic and Tridentine, but the courses in Scripture, and the interest of some of the dogma professors in Cardinal Newman's theory on the development of doctrine, helped prepare us students for the historical approach to theology that would be a feature of Vatican II.

Emerging from theological study to an assignment at Manhattan College, I found myself, as Vatican II unfolded, called upon to help explain to the Brothers, religious Sisters, and even priests, the background and the meaning of the new approaches to liturgy, Scripture, and the formulas of the catechism. This prominent position in what might be called the catbird seat led to my election in 1965 as a delegate from the District of New York to the upcoming 39th General Chapter. Although my language skills were far from developed, I eventually picked up enough facility in French to be able to communicate and eventually develop personal friendship with the leaders of the French and Spanish delegations to the Chapter. That led to appointment on international commissions and may have had something to do with my election to represent the District of New York yet again at the 40th General Chapter in 1976 and the 41st in 1986.

Hence this book and the subtitle. I was there. I feel privileged to have this opportunity to write about the experience and so get it all out of my system. I am pleased also to respond to the encouragement or gentle pressure from those who fear that something valuable for the record might otherwise be lost. I am aware, however, that my analysis may be conditioned by the fact that in 1966 I was 45 years old, one of the youngest delegates, the only one without a title, and a bit awed at finding myself in such an assembly. Ten years later, most

of the delegates were my coevals, none of them calculated to inspire me with awe. By 1986, I was shocked to find myself looked upon as a venerable old man, the oldest English-speaking delegate, and the eighth oldest in the Chapter. In that assembly, the Visitors representing their Districts looked to me like a bunch of young kids.

The question that I have been asked most often is to make comparisons among the last three General Chapters as I experienced them. That is relatively easy. The 39th General Chapter in 1966–1967, coming on the heels of Vatican II, was a heady experience. It was by far the most exhilarating, the most revolutionary, the most productive of substantive texts, and certainly the most unambiguous of the three Chapters I attended. The issues were clearly defined and so were the personalities, easily divided into the good guys and the bad guys, us and them, depending on where you stood on structural reform and the movement for change.

The 40th General Chapter, in 1976, was unquestionably the most difficult of the three. It is easy to understand why. In the ten-year period since the previous Chapter some 5,000 Brothers had requested dispensation from their vows. There was talk of division and dissension in the General Council. Rival positions among the delegates became frozen on where to put the blame for the difficulties and how to resolve them. The attempt to structure this Chapter as an exercise in discernment turned out to be for the most part a failure, and that made the sense of frustration all the worse.

The 41st General Chapter in 1986 was ultimately the most satisfying of the three to experience. For one thing, the sense of unity in brotherhood seemed in large measure to have been restored. This Chapter was the most prayerful of the three, not only in the amount and the quality of time devoted to prayer together, but also in the sobering awareness that unless the Lord were to rebuild the city, we would labor in vain to rebuild it. In this context there was a realistic assessment of our situation, a consensus on the major issues, and a firm determination to work together to bring into being something new.

I trust that there is some objectivity in this comparison of the three Chapters. But it must be recognized that complete objectivity is an impossible goal. Each capitulant experiences the General Chapter differently, depending in part on the background, expectations, and presuppositions that one brings to the Chapter. My viewpoint, therefore, is that of a delegate from the United States, who came to the Chapters with Brothers having a more or less similar experience and mind-set, and who is now writing for a mostly English-speaking audience. But the experience of the Chapter depends also on the commission to which one is assigned and the consequent quality of the

personal interaction that results. I was a member of the Finality Commission that produced the Declaration in 1966–1967, the Consecration Commission that experienced so much difficulty in 1976, and the Rule Commission in 1986. The experience of someone on the Government Commission or the Formation Commission, for example, might result in a book with a very different emphasis.

For that reason, I feel fortunate in having had easy access to Brothers who were fellow delegates at each of these Chapters: Brothers Gabriel Costello and Augustine Loes in 1966–1967; Brothers John Muller, William Harkins, David Detje, and John Martin, all members of my present community, who were delegates in 1976; and Brothers Timothy Wentworth and Jerome Sullivan in 1986. Each has read the appropriate sections and offered valuable reminiscences, corrections, and suggestions that have balanced and so improved the text considerably. For their contributions, I am most grateful.

A word should be said about terminology. If the Institute itself has been undergoing a transition, so also has the way the Brothers refer to persons, places, and things. At one time the august personage of the Superior General was referred to as the Most Honored Brother, the *Très Honoré Frère*. Now he is addressed formally as Brother Superior and sometimes informally simply by name. The Superior and his Assistants were once known as the Regime; now they are the General Council. Years ago the Brothers were known only by the name or names, often derived from obscure saints, given to them at investiture. Since 1967, the baptismal and family name has become official, but, as will be seen, many Brothers still retain at least part of the old religious name, especially if it is familiar and pronounceable. This narrative will try to help the reader follow the process whereby Brother Maurice-Auguste, for example, gradually becomes Brother Maurice-Auguste Hermans, then Brother Maurice Hermans, or simply Brother Maurice. The reader will need even more help to realize how, rather abruptly, Brother Didymus John becomes Brother William Quinn.

The building that houses the central administration is another case in point. For years it was referred to as the motherhouse, the *Maison Mère*. In 1967, the designation was officially changed, to *Casa Generalizia*, “generalate” in English and *Maison généralice* in French. This change had the advantage of finally admitting that the center was no longer in France or Belgium but in Italy. Something may have been lost, however, when the feminine and maternal image was changed for one so aggressively masculine and military, at the very time when the ambience was turning what was once perceived as a fortress into something resembling a home. For many Brothers, including this author, the place will always be the motherhouse, but

the text that follows will attempt to conform to official usage as it evolves.

In recent years, also, a growing awareness has emerged that the name America and its derivatives apply to an entire hemisphere, not only to the United States. An attempt has been made here to be sensitive to this broader usage. In Europe, however, the United States is still called America and its nationals Americans. In the context of the General Chapters of the Brothers, the delegates from the United States were known collectively as the Americans (*les Américains!*) with varying degrees of awe or suspicion, depending on the intonation. In certain contexts in this narrative, it lends authenticity to adopt the usage then current in popular speech as well as in the written sources.

There may be some significance in the fact that this Preface, customarily the last part of the book to be written, is being fed into the computer on the feast of Saint Mutien-Marie. He was known as a man of the Rule, the old Rule, that is, and it is said that he was never caught violating it. He is the saint of the Rule. We now have a new Rule, different in so many respects yet the same in the fundamentals. Our new Rule is the result of the transition that is the theme of this book. It is the author's hope that an understanding of the process leading to the development of this new Rule, this new expression of the Lasallian ideal for a new age, will motivate the Brothers today to become saints of this Rule. Observed in all of its unobservable challenges, this Rule, too, could provide a basis for canonization.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to all those involved in any way in the production of this book. In a special way I am grateful to Brother Paul Grass, former Regional Coordinator for the United States and Toronto Region and now Secretary General of the Institute, for encouragement and valuable advice in the early stages of the project; to Brother Dominic Ehrmantraut, his successor, and to Brother Robert McCann, formerly Director of Christian Brothers Publications, for supervising the editorial process; to my fellow Chapter delegates, already cited, for their criticisms and suggestions; to Brothers Francis Huether, Richard Rush and the staff at Romeoville for the tedious work of editing and proofreading the manuscript; and, finally, to the staff at Saint Mary's Press for their professional attention to the production process and the fine look of the book in its published format.

Luke Salm, FSC
 January 30, 1992
 Feast of Saint Mutien-Marie, FSC

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The General Chapters from World War II to Vatican II

It might seem at first glance, the place to begin the story of the impact of its last three General Chapters on the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools would be the dramatic events of Vatican Council II and the unprecedented decisions of the 39th General Chapter in 1966–1967. In fact, however, the forces of change had already been set in motion two decades earlier by the events of World War II. The global upheaval, the massive destruction, the displacement of peoples, and the technological advances occasioned by the war, meant that the world could never be the same again. After recovering from the upheavals of war, a reconstructed world was entering an era of global consciousness, material prosperity, political conservatism, realignment of the balance of power in what was termed a cold war, and dramatic experiments in atomic energy and in space exploration.

The war inevitably had its effect on the Church as well. For one thing, during the war years theologians and other scholars in the Church, freed from their routine teaching duties, had the time to develop and bring to maturity fresh approaches to liturgy, biblical scholarship, theological method, religious freedom, the nature of the Church, and the universal dimensions of the problem of sin and salvation. But it would take another 20 years after the war for Church leaders to realize the implications for the life of the Church and its traditional structures.

The General Chapter of 1946 and the Rule

In the Institute of the De La Salle Christian Brothers, the General Chapter of 1946, coming so soon after the end of the war, was barely touched by the emerging forces of change. If anything, that Chapter, dominated by the forceful personality of Brother Athanase-Emile, the Superior General, seems to have been concerned with getting things back to the pre-war routine as quickly as possible. Its principal act was to approve a revised text of the Rule, which represented an attempt to maintain the wording and to restore to full vigor as much as possible of the Founder's Rule of 1718.¹

After the Chapter, the Superior submitted the Rule to the Congregation of Religious for approval, the first time ever that the entire text of the Rule of the Institute had been put under the direct control of the Roman Congregation. The juridical effect of this action was to make any subsequent changes subject to Vatican approval, thus removing from the Institute all immediate control over the text of its Rule.²

If memory serves, the publication of the revised Rule was, for most Brothers at the time, a non-event. The text was not much different from what had been in force up until then and, as such, was considered by many in the Institute as unobservable, despite vigorous efforts, especially in houses of formation, to enforce it to the letter. The presuppositions of the ancient text were simply too far removed from the life experience of the contemporary world. Some of the younger generation of Brothers, fortified with a more advanced academic, theological, liturgical, and spiritual formation, found little in the 1947 Rule to provide the kind of inspiration and motivation they were discovering in sources outside the Institute.

Brother Maurice-Auguste Hermans

One of the newer generation of European Brothers was a native of Belgium, Brother Maurice-Auguste, as he was then known. Appointed in 1947 as Sub-Director of the international renewal program in Rome called the "Second Novitiate," he was charged with giving lectures on the Rule. As he became increasingly aware of the gap worldwide between the literal demands of the Rule and the actual observance, the preoccupation of the Brothers with juridical concerns rather than spiritual, and the painful crises of conscience that were the result, he began to search for a new approach to the Rule.



Brother Maurice-Auguste, the original editor of the *Cablers Lasalliens*, at work in his office.

The result of his reflections appeared in a landmark essay published in 1954 and entitled *Pour une meilleure lecture de nos Règles Communes*.³ Brother Maurice argued for an interpretation that would be historical, recognizing the human origins of the Rule in a particular context; dynamic, stressing the emphasis that the Founder's text placed on the spirit of faith and charity as interpretative principles; and evaluative, recognizing that principles are more important than particular practices, and that not everything in the Rule has the same weight or universality of application. Providentially resident in Rome, Brother Maurice was in an ideal position at this moment to influence the General Chapter of 1956.

The Achievement of the 38th General Chapter (1956)

It is not always realized by the Brothers generally how much openness to change was already apparent in 1956 at the 38th General Chapter. That Chapter lasted just about a month, as was usual at the time, and the agenda and debates in the general sessions were tightly controlled by the Superior General and the Brother Assistants, the Regime as they were called. Parliamentary procedure was unknown in those days. Pius XII, the noble, aloof, and saintly aristocrat, still had two years to live. The stern Alsatian Superior General, Brother Athanase, had died four years earlier, only to be succeeded by the tough-minded Brother Denis as Vicar General. Yet even in that climate, the Chapter did make several decisions that had a decisive impact on the future.

Lasallian Studies

One such action, hardly noticed at the time, was the decision to open a center at the Rome generalate to initiate and coordinate research into the life of John Baptist de La Salle, his distinctive spirituality, and his educational vision.⁴ The more than 50 volumes of the *Cahiers lasalliens* published since then, for the most part under the general editorship of Brother Maurice-Auguste, are the impressive result of that decision. By 1967, when Vatican II proposed the charism of the Founder as a basis for renewal of religious life, the Institute already had a solid basis by which to reassess the Founder's spirit and to relate it to the present day. It might even be said that if any one element in our recent history has held the Institute together and gives hope for the future, it is the rediscovery of the life, the person, and the achievement of John Baptist de La Salle.

Revision of the Rule

Another and ultimately very significant contribution of the 1956 Chapter stemmed from its recognition of the inadequacy of the 1947 Rule. What had been intended ten years earlier as a definitive revision of the primitive Rule had not achieved its purpose, as the Circular describing the results of the Chapter admits.

The magnitude of the work was such that the final product could not but be imperfect. Obscurities remained, even some slight contradictions lingered. Here and there the modifications brought to the text of the Holy Founder were not altogether happy. Moreover, especially in so far as the Book of Government is concerned, the work of adaptation and of keeping abreast of present necessities must continue to go on, especially in this age of rapid evolution.⁵

In its decision to undertake a revision of the Rule, the Chapter also realized that it would be important to disseminate, however cautiously, the successive drafts of the new text for review and response from the Visitors and their councils throughout the Institute.⁶ The delegates to the Chapter in 1956 had no way of knowing the kind of text that would eventually emerge as the Rule of 1987, or the extent to which every Brother in the Institute would be involved in its elaboration, but it is important to acknowledge their foresight in getting the process underway.

Provision for the Next General Chapter

Yet another capitular decision of 1956 that gave more effective voice to the Brothers generally was to suggest that the notes to be sent to the next General Chapter be generated by interested groups within the Districts.⁷ Up until that time, only notes signed by individual Brothers were accepted for consideration at the Chapter. It had been apparent for sometime that notes composed by individual Brothers in isolation had limited value. The 1956 Circular quotes favorably one capitulant:

The essential work of a Chapter should be the thorough and profound study of questions of great magnitude . . . that bear reference to new situations in which we find ourselves. These questions should be presented to the General Chapter accompanied by documents whose preparation has been attended by serious inquiry and research. Such far-reaching matters should be

foreseen and be the object of mature examination, discussion and investigation carried on beforehand.⁸

The decision in 1956 to allow notes to be submitted to the District administration for analysis, critique, and amplification at the local level before being sent on to the General Chapter was an attempt to meet the need for quality input.

The Chapter of 1956 did nothing substantial to change the governmental structure of the Institute and seems to have quickly set aside the suggestion that it might be time to decentralize. The Circular remarks:

Certain notes claim that there would be an improvement in the general administration of the Congregation if a greater measure of decentralization could be effected. The Capitulants believe that a practical study of this matter would take several sessions. They judge that if less centralization is desirable it can be prudently achieved only with time, and step by step.⁹

Nevertheless, the decision to provide for an institute-wide review in connection with the revision of the Rule, and the demand for well-prepared notes for the Chapter, are indications that the movement to decentralize was at least in its initial stages.

Finally, in electing Brother Nicet-Joseph as Superior General, the 1956 Chapter seemed consciously to turn away from candidates reputed to be effective administrators and strict disciplinarians in favor of a more pastoral, more spiritual, and more self-effacing type of Brother to lead the Institute. The personality of the new Superior, his spirituality developed over many years as Director of the Rome Second Novitiate, and his experience from 1963 to 1965 as a *peritus* at the Vatican Council, paved the way for a wider and more effective participation of the entire Institute in the General Chapters to follow.

Preparation for the Chapter of 1966

Only a little more than two years after the close of the 1956 Chapter events in the life of the Church began to move rapidly in a direction that none of the capitulants in 1956 could have foreseen. The election of Pope John XXIII to succeed Pius XII and the convocation of Vatican Council II set the whole Church on a program of adaptation to the modern world, an *aggiornamento* symbolized by Pope John's image of the windows of the Vatican open to fresh air and fresh ideas.

Within a short time, the Brothers, worldwide and in varying degrees were caught up in the changes in the liturgy and biblical scholarship, fresh approaches to theology and catechetics, the ecumenical movement, and the creation of more open structures in church government and religious life.

Meanwhile, immediately after the 1956 Chapter, the superiors in Rome had already organized a process for revising the Rule. The redaction was entrusted to a committee of the Regime composed of Brother Philip-Antoon, the Vicar General, as Chairman, and Brother Assistants¹⁰ Aubert-Joseph, Majorian-Pius, and Dominikus Norbert. Although the Chapter had envisioned "the completion of the work of 1946," it soon became evident that rather than to attempt again an update of the 18th century texts, it was preferable to try to create a new Rule altogether. By 1961, a first draft was ready to be presented to the intercircular meeting of the Visitors. They were asked to consult with their councils, to include in the consultation additional competent Brothers,¹¹ and to forward appropriate recommendations to Rome.

On the basis of this consultation, a second draft of the Rule was prepared and sent out in April 1964 for further review. The suggestion that the Visitors might widen the consultation to include all the Brothers was rejected; it was pointed out that more than 700 Brothers institute-wide were already engaged in the process.¹² In the early months of 1965, a third draft was completed and approved by the Regime for distribution to the delegates to the Chapter once they were elected.

Earlier, on December 8, 1963, with repeated reference to *aggiornamento* in the Church and in the Institute, the Superior General had in a circular letter addressed the need to prepare thoroughly for the upcoming Chapter scheduled to open in 1966.¹³ In his appeal to the Brothers to become "chapter conscious," the Superior quoted the remark of Pope Paul VI to the clergy of Rome about the problems of the future: "You and I must face it [sic] together." Brother Nicet-Joseph adds this comment:

The Pope was asking his listeners to work with him, not just to wait for orders from above and obediently execute them. What he was asserting was that superiors and subjects should work hand in hand more than ever before, for the religious and professional problems facing us today are so much more complex than in the past.

That is the appeal we are addressing to you, with all our hearts, as we begin to prepare for the Chapter. When all is said and done, we have to realize that "the Institute is each one of us."¹⁴

The Circular contained the text of a questionnaire that had previously been sent to all the Visitors, inviting each District to reply to 76 questions on such topics as statistics, the apostolic finality or purpose of the Institute in relation to the schools within the District, the religious life of the Brothers, and the vitality of the Institute at the District level. Now all the Brothers, including those in temporary vows, were being asked to address the same questions in their communities, and so broaden the input to the Chapter from the Districts.

It is noteworthy that the two issues that would initially engage the attention of the forthcoming Chapter, namely the priesthood and the administrative structure of the Institute, were not explicitly addressed in the questionnaire. But at least a process had been set in motion to engage on an unprecedented scale all the Brothers of the Institute, individually and collectively, in preparation for the Chapter. Just prior to the opening of the Chapter, a 30 page summary of the responses was prepared in French and duplicated for the use of the capitulants.¹⁵

On October 20, 1965, the Superior issued a circular letter formally convoking the Chapter, with the opening date set for April 20, 1966, at the motherhouse in Rome.¹⁶ Members of the Chapter *ex officio* would be the Superior General, the Vicar General, the Brother Assistants and former Assistants, the Procurator General, the Secretary General, the Econome General, the Postulator General, the Visitor Generals, the Director of the Rome Second Novitiate, and the Visitors of all Districts having more than 250 professed Brothers. Districts with between 251 and 500 professed Brothers were to elect one additional delegate; those with more than 500 Brothers were to elect two additional delegates.

Preparation for the Chapter in the United States

The expectations for the coming General Chapter in the light of the spiritual, psychological, and theological forces released by Vatican II, were especially high among the Brothers in the United States. The time seemed ripe to end a long history of uniformity imposed from the Institute center, a legalistic approach to religious observance, lack of appreciation for the American adaptation of the Lasallian tradition, and inadequate representation in the decision-making process.

The process set in motion by the 1956 Chapter gave hope of success. The consultation on the Rule and the questions raised in Circular 379 had already accustomed the Brothers to expect that radical

change was possible and even inevitable. The invitation to submit proposals to the Chapter based on group discussion and consensus gave status and importance to prechapter meetings of Brothers in the Districts and in the Region. Also, Brother Nicet-Joseph, who had been elected Superior General for life, had announced his intention to resign in order to give the Chapter the opportunity to elect a new Superior qualified to lead the Institute into the post-Vatican II era.

The initiative in preparing an agenda for the Chapter that would represent a consensus of the Brothers in the United States came from the Brother Visitors. Meeting with their honorary Chairman, Brother Charles Henry, the American Assistant General, at the Sangre de Cristo Retreat Center outside Santa Fe, New Mexico, in January 1965, the 16 members of the US Conference of Visitors passed a series of resolutions to express the concerns of the Brothers of their Districts.¹⁷ The Visitors cited the need for structural change while preserving “the identity and the image of the Brothers of the Christian Schools as non-clerical educators who fulfill their mission mainly in and through the schools.” The Visitors urged that in the new Rule “there should be a clear definition of the vocation of the Christian Brother in terms of his two-fold life of Religious Educator,” and that the “integration of the professional and spiritual life of the Brother should be stated as a basic principle in the Rule. . . .”

Among the changes urged in the Visitors’ resolutions were the following: that the constitutions in the Rule be “thoroughly revised,” that “only general principles be stated,” and that they “reflect a tone of joy and loyalty . . . rather than distrust and suspicion”; that the annual retreats be restructured and shortened to five days; that intellectual and professional training be assigned the highest priority; that it be possible to adjust the horarium to meet local needs; that the family name of the Brothers be used officially; that the spiritual exercises known as the advertisement of defects and the accusation of faults “be eliminated or drastically revised”; that “there be a complete reform of our prayer life . . . in the spirit of Vatican II”; that “each Brother regulate his use of alcoholic beverages and tobacco” within regional guidelines; that the regional coutumier regulate “the permission to teach women on the university and high school level.” All but 1 of the 22 resolutions passed unanimously. The only resolution that yielded negative votes, but passed 14–2, was that each District prepare “a limited number of experts” to be “recognized scholars in their fields.”

Among the resolutions were several dealing with the General Chapter and the central administration of the Institute: that represen-

tation at the General Chapter be reapportioned; that independent authority and responsibility be distributed as widely as possible, thus decentralizing the Institute government; that parliamentary law be observed at the General Chapter; that resolutions be distributed beforehand and verbatim; that clerical help and advisers be supplied to the capitulants; that Regional and District Chapters be held periodically; that the Brother Assistant consult with the Brothers of a District before a Visitor is appointed; and that the Brother Assistant be elected in a deliberative vote by the delegates to the General Chapter from his Region.

The Santa Fe resolutions, as they came to be known, served admirably to develop among the Brothers in the United States the chapter consciousness that the Superior had asked for in his circular. Almost every District in the United States established a formal program whereby the resolutions were discussed in community, after which votes were taken and the results tabulated. The New York District, for one, developed and circulated position statements in support of each of the resolutions. In all the Districts, Brothers were urged to send personal notes to the Chapter supporting all or some of the resolutions.

In view of the eventual outcome at the Chapter, it is remarkable that the extensive, well-developed, and progressive agenda elaborated at Santa Fe was not only foresightful in its scope, but was eventually accepted by the Chapter in all of its priority items and most of its details.

The Santa Fe resolutions were passed in January 1965. The Chapter was formally convoked in October of that year. The election of delegates took place in December. All of the US Visitors who were not *ex officio* delegates were elected. The Visitors were Brothers D. John Quinn (Baltimore), B. Leo Kirby (New York), A. Joseph Finnegan (LI-NE), L. Thomas Matthews (Saint Louis), I. Basil Rothweiller (Winona, MN), T. Jerome West (San Francisco), and A. Raphael Bodin (New Orleans-Santa Fe). New York was entitled to elect two additional delegates (C. Luke Salm and C. Gabriel Costello), Baltimore and Saint Louis one each (E. Paul Carey and I. Philip Matthews respectively). Brothers Charles Henry, the American Assistant, and Erminus Joseph, Visitor General, were members by right, bringing the total of US delegates to an ominous 13. In addition, each of the seven Districts elected alternates. These alternates were invited to participate in the meetings of delegates to prepare for the Chapter.



39th General Chapter. The original US delegation numbered only 13 Brothers. The group was augmented by experts and observers admitted to the Second Session.

Preparation for the Chapter by the United States Delegates

The first meeting of the delegates and alternates was held at the retreat center in Plano, Illinois.¹⁸ The atmosphere was bristling with excitement and anticipation. The thought uppermost in the minds of the newly elected delegates was their responsibility to elect the next Superior General to succeed Brother Nicet-Joseph. There was no question at the Plano meeting but that this might be the time to think of an American Superior to lead the Institute. Presuming that the new Superior would come from among the Assistants, the consensus at Plano was that no candidate in the Regime seemed so qualified as Brother Charles Henry.

Agreement on this point led the delegates to consider which Brother they might want to put forward as the candidate to be the

next American Assistant. This question was a bit more delicate. It was obvious that the choice would most likely favor one of those present at the meeting. The New York District delegates suggested that, since in the past the American Assistants had usually been chosen out of New York, it was time to have an Assistant from some other District. Some delegates supported the Visitor of San Francisco, others the Visitor of Baltimore. Despite the disclaimer of the New Yorkers, some still preferred the then Visitor of New York. The three nominees were asked to leave the room to allow frank discussion. The Californians advised that the group take seriously the expressed wish of their Visitor that he not be considered. The Visitor of Saint Louis argued that the personal qualities of Brother Leo Kirby, the New York Visitor, were just what were needed at the time. That sentiment carried the day in the straw vote that followed.¹⁹

Policy Positions

With the subject of candidates for high office out of the way, the delegates could turn to policy matters. The theme of many of the Santa Fe resolutions was the need to decentralize the authority structure in the Institute. Experience showed how impossible it had become to enforce rules concerning lifestyle, prayer life, and educational work uniformly throughout the world, especially in the United States. This view was thematized in the concept of subsidiarity, a principle already endorsed in the teaching of the papal encyclicals.

The president of the Visitor's Conference at the time, and therefore unofficial president of the US delegation, was Brother Didymus John, the Visitor of Baltimore. He had a reputation for conducting meetings efficiently by adhering strictly to a parliamentary procedure that assured a disciplined but open process of discussion and vote. He, and most of the newly elected delegates, were startled to hear from delegates to previous Chapters details of the authoritarian procedures that had prevailed: total control by the Superior of the agenda and the conduct of meetings, including the extension or limitation of debate, the choice of those who would be called upon to speak, and voting by raised hands.²⁰ It became immediately clear how essential it was to petition for rules of procedure that would leave control of the Chapter in the hands of the delegates. Otherwise there could be no hope for any grass roots movement for reform and renewal.

Another matter of concern was the question of representation at the Chapter. At the time, there were in the Institute almost 3,500 Brothers of French nationality, followed closely by roughly 3,000 Brothers in the United States, and about 2,300 in Spain. Yet for the

coming Chapter, there would be 33 French delegates, including the Superior and three French Assistants, with the United States and Spain having only 13 delegates each.²¹ Obviously, nothing could be done to change the inequitable distribution of delegates already elected. A partial solution that was adopted was to argue strenuously for the presence at the Chapter of expert consultants, similar to the *periti* who had exercised such a major influence at Vatican II. It was felt that the large number of qualified Brothers in the United States with advanced professional and academic degrees would provide experts to bolster the American impact on the Chapter.²²

Strategies

Once the major elements of the program were in place, namely, an American Superior General, subsidiarity in government, democratic rules of procedure for the Chapter, and *periti* as a move toward more equitable representation, the US delegates had to develop some strategies to assure that they and the Brothers they represented would have an effective voice during the Chapter.

Several courses of action were decided upon. First, the delegates would prepare, or have highly qualified Brothers prepare, position papers on the major issues. Three Brothers at Manhattan College were assigned the paper on subsidiarity; Brothers from Winona, MN were to collate sample models of the Rule; two Brothers from LI-NE and one from Winona, MN were to develop new structures to implement subsidiarity; and a group from the Washington Scholasticate was assigned to prepare papers on the nonclerical status of the Institute and rededication to teaching the underprivileged. In addition, the Visitor of Santa Fe agreed to circulate a model Rule proposed by the Central District of France; the Visitor of Baltimore would contact Rome on matters of procedure; and the Visitor of LI-NE would arrange for a meeting of the US delegation in Rome prior to the opening of the Chapter.²³

Convinced of the importance of personal contact, the delegates agreed to write to Brothers around the world who were known to them, for example, companions from the Rome Second Novitiate, to ask their reactions to the main elements in the US program. Also at the time a number of young American Brothers studying abroad could easily be contacted. These strategies were considered legitimate in light of the official policy that seemed to favor cooperative projects in preparation for the Chapter. Brother Charles Henry, the American Assistant in Rome, was made aware of these initiatives, to which he gave his approval, often enthusiastically, sometimes cautiously, but always noncommittal in anything that referred to himself.²⁴

In addition, Brother Charles was able to influence the Regime in Rome in ways that were helpful. In a letter to the Visitor of New York dated January 17, he relayed a request from the Regime that Brothers Luke Salm and Gabriel Costello at Manhattan College prepare a paper to be distributed to all the capitulants on the significance of Vatican Council II for the Brothers.²⁵ The two Brothers agreed, enlisting the help of Brother Paul Gladhill with the project.

Then, on February 21, Brother D. John circulated a memo with the "good news" that Brother Charles Henry had drawn up a set of rules, which has been accepted by the Regime, to be presented to the Chapter for its acceptance at an early session.²⁶ Entitled *Rules of Procedure for Sessions of the General Chapter*, the document in effect accepted this priority item on the American agenda. It was a breakthrough toward an open Chapter. The most significant of the proposed rules was the first, which stated the principle: "The General Chapter shall determine its rules of procedure and may change them as it sees fit." In subsequent developments, this principle led to the provision for an elected general chairman (*Commissary*) and elected moderators to conduct the sessions of the Chapter in the manner of Vatican II.

The answers received from the Brothers contacted around the world were duplicated and circulated among all the US delegates and alternates. The response in the letters was most encouraging. The winds of change generated by Vatican II were evidently blowing on a global scale. The frustration in dealing with overcentralized authority structures in the Institute seemed almost universal. It was learned that in many countries the Brother Assistants exercised direct control over the details of district administration to the point where the Visitors were little more than secretaries. There were complaints that the Latin American delegates had been forbidden to meet before the Chapter. Brothers everywhere seemed to be buoyed by the hope that an American initiative at the Chapter might bring about the desired decentralization of authority.²⁷

This success in consciousness-raising led the US delegates to suggest a schedule of meetings before the Chapter with delegates from other countries, beginning perhaps with Canada. Brother Charles Henry balked at this suggestion, however, fearing that it might be interpreted as a political move to pit the new world against the old.²⁸ Instead, Brother Paul Carey, who was fluent in French, was asked to make a personal tour of the Canadian districts. He found them quite open to the need for change and prepared to support the main lines of the US agenda. As he reported, "I am quite certain that had we met

as a single group . . . it would have been manifest that our spirit is identical."²⁹

Meanwhile, varied reports were coming in from American Brothers in Europe, some attending the Second Novitiate in Rome, others studying in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. In some places there was a sense of hopelessness and despair, in others a great interest and serious preparation for the coming Chapter, some even expressing the hope that the Americans would assume a leadership role in it. The American "second novices" in Rome seem not to have been shy about beating the drums for the candidacy of an American Superior General, nor were they slow in reporting positive responses to such a proposal.

Other groups of Americans abroad that were heard from were those serving in mission lands, especially in the Philippines and in East Africa. Direct contacts by mail were made with native Brothers from Burma, Viet Nam, Penang, and Latin America. These contacts served to alert the delegates to the difficulties and needs of the Brothers in mission lands, and their perception that they would not be adequately represented at the Chapter. The Brothers in Ethiopia specifically requested that one of their American missionaries, Brother Basilian Amedy, be brought to the Chapter as a *peritus* and so provide them with some form of representation.³⁰ A similar proposal was made for the same reason in favor of Brother A. Philip Nelan, then the Auxiliary Visitor for the Philippines.³¹ These proposals would eventually bear fruit in the second session of the Chapter, when representatives from these areas were admitted to the Chapter as observers.

Letters from some of the French Brothers let it be known that they too were preparing seriously for the Chapter and were anxious to share opinions and suggestions with the US delegates before the Chapter. One French Visitor wrote as follows:

Have no fears that the mentality on this side of the Ocean is so very different from your own. I hasten to assure you that such is not the case. The Old World is not too far behind the new democracy, the U.S.A., [sic] and it would be very surprising if France were not part of any revolution!!! France has often been the one to urge the storming of the Bastille.

The Visitors of France have been working very hard in preparation for the Chapter. We have been meeting three times a year for the past five years, and we have been participating in that "collegiality" that we hope to see formalized by the Chapter in the Constitutions.³²

A seven-page communiqué from the Central District of France provided some evidence of the results, describing in detail well-articulated positions on the basic issues: a call for a review and a vote on the new Rule in successive stages; support for the presence of *periti* at the Chapter (not surprising since there were in France many Brothers qualified in theology, psychology, catechetics, and other fields who would not otherwise be called to the Chapter); a demand that the government structure of the Institute be overhauled, with particular reference to recasting the role of the Assistants; and, finally, a detailed proposal that would provide not only for a more equitable representation at future Chapters, but also the possibility of electing many more nonsuperiors as delegates.³³

Of all the national groups, the Spanish were the least known to the American delegates. A letter from one American Brother studying in Spain painted a rather dim view of the situation there, particularly of the young Brothers: domination by superiors, especially the Assistants, inadequate educational opportunities, a poor public image, and poor morale. The District of Bilbao was cited as perhaps an exception.³⁴

As it happened, the only direct contact that the US delegates were able to make with Spain was with the District of Bilbao through Brother Gregory Robertson, then President of Saint Mary's College, Winona, MN. He had been in the Second Novitiate with Brother Pablo Manuel, who had recently been relieved of his charge as Visitor of Bilbao, a man whom Brother Gregory described as likely to be open to at least some of the US agenda.

The reply of Brother Pablo reflects a combination of resignation and cautious optimism. He notes that his busy schedule has left little time to prepare thoroughly for the Chapter, but expresses the hope that the Spanish delegates might meet before going to Rome. Brother Pablo dismisses Brother Gregory's suggestion that he might be a candidate for the office of Superior General.³⁵

The superiors in the Regime were still suspicious of the contacts among groups of delegates that the Americans considered vital if any consensus was to emerge on crucial issues. Rather than challenge the authorities directly, the US delegates decided to arrive in Rome a few days ahead of time, take rooms in a hotel, review the preparation, and meet with as many delegates from other countries as possible. The site was the Hotel Michelangelo in the shadow of the dome of Saint Peter's, as good an omen as anyone could wish.

There, for the first time, the communication was face to face, even when through interpreters or in broken fragments of French and

English. For the Americans, it was an opportunity to come to understand the hopes and problems of fellow delegates from other lands, all called to Rome to represent the Body of the Institute at a critical moment in its history. These meetings lasted from Monday, April 18, until Wednesday, April 20. On Monday, after reviewing developments since the Plano meeting, the US delegates received visits from Brothers from England, Australia, and Toronto. On Tuesday morning, Brother Charles Henry came to brief the delegates on the state of affairs in the motherhouse. That afternoon, Brother O. Georges from Canada came to lobby for his proposal to replace the residential Assistants with a council of expert advisers around the Superior. On Wednesday morning, while some of the other Canadian and Irish Brothers came to visit, Brothers Leo Kirby and Paul Carey went quietly to the motherhouse to interview Brother Pablo Manuel and so ascertain as best they could the mood of the Spanish.³⁶

By and large, these encounters only confirmed what the contacts by mail had made clear: support for an open Chapter, decentralization in government, a new style of leadership, and the possibility of a second session, if necessary, to give due attention to all the fundamental issues, especially the revision of the Rule. Rather than the conspiracy that some had feared, this program gave those who participated a chance to get to know other delegates and their hopes for the Institute, a respect for other points of view, an opportunity to identify the critical issues and to build consensus, and in general, to engender in the delegates a sense of both their collective power and their common responsibility.

So fortified, on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 20, the Americans checked out of the hotel and found their way to the imposing buildings at 476 Via Aurelia to join their confreres from all over the world and begin the retreat that would mark the opening of the 39th General Chapter.

Notes

1. *Rules and Constitutions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, Rome, 1947 (English edition).

2. In a set of notes distributed at the *Sesstion Internationale des Etudes Lasalliens* (SIEL), November 1990, Brother Michel Sauvage has developed an extensive commentary and critique of the process by which the Rule of 1947 was submitted for approval. The author has a copy.

3. Published in *Entre Nous*, a publication of the *Secrétariat Général des Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes*, Paris, Nos. 36–44, 1954.

4. Circular 354, July 16, 1956, p. 100.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

6. *Ibid.*

7. In the FSC Institute, the administrative units called Districts presided over by a Brother Visitor correspond to what in many other congregations are called Provinces presided over by a Provincial. For clarity, Districts and Visitors hereafter use upper case.

8. Circular 354, p. 91.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

10. This term refers to the traditional Assistants to the Superior General. It will be capitalized henceforth when used in this sense.

11. It was in this capacity that the author became involved for the first time in the revision of the Rule.

12. Circular 380, April 30, 1964.

13. Circular 379, December 18, 1963.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11.

15. A copy is in ANYD.

16. Circular 383.

17. The four pages of resolutions follow a cover resolution entitled *Resolution on this January, 1965, Meeting of the Major Superiors of the United States*. Copy in ANYD.

18. The reasons for calling the meeting so soon after the elections are explained in a letter from Brother D. John, Visitor of Baltimore, to the elected delegate and substitutes, dated January 4, 1966. He cites the likelihood of a long delay before the new version of the Rule and the official summary of the notes to the Chapter would be available. He also notes that time might be required to implement any action plan that the delegates might want to take. Copy in ANYD.

19. There is no written record of this discussion or its outcome. The account is based on the recollection of the author who was present and who, in fact, received one vote admittedly cast by the maverick Brother in the delegation.

20. See "Description of the Way a Chapter is Conducted" in the *Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Chapter of 1966—Jan. 15–17, 1966. Plano II*. Copy in ANYD.

21. More precise statistics were circulated and analyzed for the US delegates in a one-page paper with no indication of author or date. Copy in ANYD.

22. See "*periti*," in the minutes of January 15–17.

23. See "General Action to Prepare for the Chapter," *ibid.*

24. See the letter of Brother Charles Henry to "Brother Visitor" (the context indicates it is a response to Brother D. John) dated January 10, 1966; also the letter of Brother Charles to Brother [Joel] Damian dated February 16, 1966, where he says, among other things, "You can believe me that it gives me the creeps to see my name being tossed about by various correspondents, but I try to console myself with the thought that the Holy Spirit has His own designs. . . ." Copy in ANYD.

25. Original and copies in ANYD.

26. Copy for distribution to delegates and alternates in ANYD.

27. These themes run through many of the letters which were received and duplicated for distribution to the US delegates. A complete set is in ANYD.

28. See the letter of Brother Charles Henry to Brother [D. John] Visitor, dated January 10, 1966. Copy for distribution in ANYD.

29. Letter from Brother E. Paul to Brother D. John, Visitor, dated February 10, 1966. Brother Paul, after describing his visit to Canada, concludes with these words: "I am happy to say that I am certain that the Assistant's fears on this point from what experience I have just had, are absolutely groundless." Copy for distribution in ANYD.

30. *An Open Letter to the American Delegates to the General Chapter of 1966*, signed "Brothers of Saint Joseph and Nativity Schools, Addis Ababa, and Brothers of Annunciation School, Dire Dawa." Copy in ANYD.

31. Letter from Brother Augustine Philip to Brother [T. Jerome] Visitor. Undated copy for distribution to US delegates in ANYD.

32. Letter from Frère Ferdinand-Alfred, Visitor of Lille, to "Brother Visitor [D. John?] and Fellow Second Novice of 1955," dated January 28, 1966. A translated and distributed copy is in ANYD.

33. Summary in six single-spaced pages sent from Frère Jules Chambert to Brother B. Paul Broyles. Copy in ANYD.

34. Document distributed to US delegates, undated and identified as "Copy of an article written by Rev. Brother Raphael De Sales, FSC Student studying in Madrid, Spain." Copy in ANYD.

35. Letter of Hermano Pablo Manuel to Brother J. Gregory dated February 3, 1966. Copy of the translation distributed to the US delegates in ANYD.

36. No official minutes or other records were kept of these meetings. The data here is based on the recollection and the entries in the diary of the author, who was present. He notes; "Mon. 4/18. Meetings all day. . . . Met Baptist (Australia), Richard (England), and Leo (Toronto)"; "Tues 4/19. AM meeting with BCH—briefing on state of affairs in M.H.—Afternoon session with O. Georges [Canada]. He wants experts around the Superior and doesn't know what to do with geographical Assistants"; "Wed 4/20. AM meeting with Canadians and Irish—Leo and Paul made quiet trip to M.H. to visit Pablo Manuel, leader of young thought among the Spanish. They seem to be agreeable to BCH for SG—against their own Assistants." Manuscript original in ANYD.

2

The 39th General Chapter First Session (1966): Organization

Beginning with the first issue, dated February 15, 1966, a series of bulletins prepared by the Secretary General "For the Information of the Brothers Everywhere," described the preparations at the Rome motherhouse for the opening of the Chapter.¹ Physical improvements had been made to the building and the extensive grounds surrounding it. A network of transistors had been installed in the chapter hall, and translators had been appointed to provide simultaneous translation, a remarkable and unprecedented advance that allowed capitulants for the first time to address the general assembly and be understood in their own language. A new electronic system to register, tally, and display the votes of the delegates included a series of push buttons to register one's vote, located under the cover of each desk to assure secrecy.²

Composition of the Chapter

All told there were 119 delegates.³ The oldest, Brother Denis, the former Vicar General, who from 1952 to 1956 had replaced the deceased Brother Athanase-Emile, was 84 years old;⁴ the youngest was the future Visitor of Besançon in France, who was 39. The majority were born between 1900 and 1920; 17 were born before 1900, and 16 after 1920; the average age was 56.

The statistics show that 48 delegates attended by right of office: 31 members of the Regime and the Central Administration plus 17 Visitors of Districts with more than 250 perpetually professed Brothers. Although the Bulletin boasts that elected delegates constituted 60 percent of the total, this figure is deceptive, since the vast majority of the elected delegates were the Visitors of their Districts. Even Districts entitled to elect more than one delegate tended to give the preference to the Auxiliary Visitor of the District or some prominent Director.

The Bulletin also identifies the 22 different countries of origin of the delegates: 33 were born in France; 17 in Spain; 14 in Canada; 12 in the United States; 10 in Belgium; 7 in Italy; 4 in Mexico; 3 each in

Brazil and Ireland; 2 each in England, Germany, Austria, and Columbia; 1 each in Argentina, Australia, Cuba, Holland, Madagascar, Sarawak, Czechoslovakia, Venezuela, and Vietnam.⁵

A somewhat different picture, one that highlights the problem of inequitable representation, emerges when the breakdown of the official list of delegates is made as follows:

- From the Generalate (7 delegates): Superior General, Secretary General, Econome General, Procurator General, Director of Second Novitiate, Visitor of Motherhouse, Retired Vicar General.⁶
- From France (30 delegates): 3 Active Assistants, 3 Retired Assistants, 1 Visitor General, the Secretary of the Central District, 13 Visitors of Districts in France, 5 Visitors of French Missionary Districts. From Districts entitled to more than 1 delegate there were 2 Auxiliary Visitors and 2 Directors.
- From Latin America (17 delegates): 2 Active Assistants (both Spanish), 2 Visitor Generals, 13 Visitors (mostly Spanish).
- From the United States (13 delegates): 1 Active Assistant, 1 Visitor General, 7 Visitors. From Districts entitled to more than 1 delegate there were a former Visitor, a Director, and 2 college professors.⁷
- From Spain (11 Delegates): 1 Active Assistant, 1 Visitor General, 6 Visitors. From Districts entitled to more than 1 delegate, 3 Directors were elected.
- From Canada (11 delegates): 1 Active Assistant, 1 Retired Assistant, 1 Visitor General, 5 Visitors, 1 Missionary Visitor. From Districts entitled to more than 1 delegate, 2 Directors were elected.
- From England, Ireland, and Asia: (10 delegates): 1 Active Assistant, 2 English Visitors, 1 Irish Visitor and his Auxiliary, 1 Australian Visitor, 4 Asian Visitors.
- From the Low Countries (8 delegates): 1 Active Vicar General, 2 Belgian Visitors, 1 Holland Visitor, 1 Missionary Visitor. From Districts entitled to more than 1 delegate, 2 Auxiliary Visitors and 1 Director.
- From Italy (6 delegates): 1 Active Assistant, 1 Retired Assistant, 1 Visitor General, 2 Visitors, 1 Director.
- From Central Europe (4 delegates): 1 Active Assistant, 3 Visitors.

Apart from the Superior and the permanent staff in the motherhouse, a tally of the positions held by the delegates shows the following: 12 Assistants in Office, 4 Retired Assistants, 7 Visitor Generals, 66 Visitors, 1 Retired Visitor, 7 Auxiliary Visitors, 10 Directors. Of the two college professors elected from New York, one was a Sub-Director, the other, the author of these recollections, had the distinction of

being the only delegate without an official Institute title or "obedience."⁸

The statistics were altered somewhat once the Chapter opened. Brother Zacarias, Retired Assistant, was too ill to attend, as was Brother Dominikus Norbert, Assistant for Central Europe. He died on May 27 while the Chapter was still in session. Since the Visitor of Czechoslovakia was not allowed to leave his country, he was replaced by a Polish Brother who had been studying in Paris. The Visitor of Reunion was replaced by Brother Polycarpe-Marie, who years later would figure in the beatification of Brother Scubilion. Most significant from a statistical point of view was the insistence of the Visitor of Sao Paulo that he be replaced by his alternate, the 34-year-old Brother Cristovao.⁹ That action not only threw all the statistics out of line, but added a young, progressive, and highly intelligent voice to the deliberations.

Chapter Preliminaries

The first official action taken immediately prior to the beginning of the Chapter was the opening and classification of notes sent directly to the Chapter. This work was entrusted to a commission appointed by the Superior and composed, according to Rule, of six *ex officio* and six elected delegates. This commission met over the weekend before the Chapter was to begin. Their work was surrounded by high drama. Each member had to take an oath not to remove or destroy any of the notes, and not to reveal anything about their content or their authors. When the work was finished, it turned out that 3,422 such notes had been received. The commission had a scruple about the notes wherein the authors had typed but not signed their names. These notes were put to one side for the Chapter to decide their fate. (They were eventually admitted.) The Secretary General then kept the notes under lock and key until the chapter commissions were formed.¹⁰

In view of the fact that the Institute at the time numbered roughly 16,000 Brothers, the number of notes is hardly impressive. In a way, it was the first evidence that the old system of individual access to the Chapter in a climate of suspicion and solemn secrecy was already an anachronism. So much discussion had been going on, so many surveys conducted and position papers prepared, that the notes from isolated Brothers had already begun to lose their significance and impact.

The Chapter News Bulletin of April 25, 1966, remarks: "By Wednesday morning, April 20, most of the capitulars, *with the exception of the Canadian and USA delegations*, had reached the mother-house."¹¹ One can detect a disguised and not altogether friendly reference to the fact that the American group had been meeting up until the last minute elsewhere in Rome.

At any rate, the delegates from the United States did arrive on time in midafternoon and were greeted warmly by Brother Charles Henry, Assistant General, who had come only briefly to the sessions at the Rome hotel.¹² He wished his compatriots well in achieving their goals, expressing his confidence in their concern for the Institute and their competence to represent the Brothers of their Districts. He indicated, however, that he would not get personally involved in the strategies, least of all, any attempt to promote his own candidacy to be elected Superior.

On arrival, each delegate learned that he had been assigned not only a bedroom but also a specific place in the chapel, the dining room, and the chapter hall. The American delegates had little time to get settled, however, much less to contemplate or adjust to the new surroundings. At 4:30 p.m. on that first afternoon the delegates were summoned to the chapter hall to begin the week-long retreat that was to precede the Chapter proper. In his opening conference, Brother Nicet-Joseph, the Superior, told the delegates that they were blessed to be able to leave behind all concern for their customary employment and to live the integral religious life for the first time since they last made a retreat.¹³ Then came the opening talk of the retreat master, Father Delchard, a Jesuit with a reputation as a jurist and canon lawyer, who indicated he would devote his series of talks to an exegesis of the conciliar documents on religious life. That evening, and thereafter during the retreat, the talks were followed by the regular schedule of spiritual reading and evening meditation. There was reading during the evening meal, including the first together as a Chapter.

At the end of supper that evening, the Superior announced, *Récréation—en silence!* Brother Leo Kirby grabbed one of his New York Brothers by the elbow and exclaimed, "You'd think they'd have drinks or something so we could all get to know one another." The Brother slyly reminded his Visitor that he was breaking silence.¹⁴ It was a grim beginning.

The hours dragged on during the following days as the delegates settled into the routine of the retreat. The English-speaking members were housed in the second-novitiate building. Each of the high-ceilinged rooms was furnished with a small writing desk, a stiff low-back straw chair, an armoire of sorts fashioned from old vegetable

crates, a thin mattress on a tall iron cot, and a cold water sink. Showers were located several floors below in the basement and only intermittently provided hot water. The presumption seemed to be that they would rarely be used.

The rising bell rang at 5:30 a.m. and the retreat exercises supplemented rather than replaced the regular community prayer schedule.¹⁵ The talks by the priest and the Superior consisted for the most part of commentaries on the documents of Vatican II concerning the religious life. Both speakers tried to give a positive tone, but their presentations were hedged about with caution and defensiveness in the face of the challenges of the contemporary world.¹⁶

Perhaps the worst part for the anxious and fully-prepared Americans was the frustration in not being able to communicate easily with the other delegates or to get on with the work they had come prepared to do. At least it was possible to caucus, which provided an opportunity to review the prospects for success and to refine strategy.¹⁷ Some of the more enterprising American delegates discovered that the English and Irish Brothers in the motherhouse had the custom of gathering in the infirmary for tea each day at 4:00 p.m. under the aegis of a very sympathetic French-Canadian infirmarian. These sessions, at which both the English-Irish and the American Assistants were present, were an effective way of plugging into the motherhouse grapevine. On one of these occasions, for example, it was learned that the Irish Christian Brothers had been given the go-ahead to co-opt the title "Christian Brothers" and to leave the title "De La Salle Brothers" to the FSC.¹⁸

From time to time during the retreat there was a refreshing introduction of a bit of business connected with the Chapter. On the first full day of the retreat, the fourth draft (P. 4) of the revised Rule was distributed, the first attempt at a spiritual text in line with the thrust of the Council. On the last day of the retreat, a form listing the chapter commissions was passed out with instructions to sign up for the commission of choice. The Americans learned that some of the French and Spanish delegates were planning to refuse to sign up in protest against the list of commissions having been drawn up in advance by the Regime. They expected the Americans to join the protest. After caucusing, the US group decided that this was neither the time nor the issue to test the will of the Chapter to determine procedural matters. Instead, it was suggested that the form be filled out with the annotation, "subject to protest and revision." Most of the French and Spanish delegates finally agreed that this was the wisest course for the moment.¹⁹

These preliminaries, the concern for precision and secrecy in sorting out the notes, the monastic austerity of the motherhouse, the personal isolation and juridical emphasis in the retreat, all were obviously intended to create what had always been considered the proper climate for a Chapter. Although the Superior, the incumbent Regime, and the administrative staff were obviously aware that some change was inevitable, their cautious approach was to surround any suggested changes with enough safeguards to minimize their impact on the status quo.²⁰ In many ways, it was the last gasp of an old way of doing things. It would not be long before the forces of change would, for better or worse, sweep away the monastic routine, the distrust and secrecy, the predominance of one national group and culture, and the total control from the top.

The retreat concluded on Tuesday, April 26, with a "pilgrimage" by chartered coach to the shrine at Genazzano where is venerated a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, whose feast it was. At the conclusion of the sung Mass celebrated in the shrine, the Superior General, Brother Nicet-Joseph, recited the act of consecration of the Institute to Mary Immaculate. In this way, the delegates to the 39th General Chapter commemorated the pilgrimage from Reims to the shrine of Our Lady of Liesse that Saint John Baptist de La Salle had undertaken with his Brothers after the first general assembly in 1686.

Unlike the primitive Brothers, who made their pilgrimage on foot, the 1966 delegates were taken by coach to Albano, where the District of Rome had a home for retired Brothers, a junior novitiate, and a retreat house. The center had been heavily damaged by bombing during the war, but had recently been rebuilt with funds from the United States Government. The capitulants were treated to a multi-course meal, Italian style, and afterwards to a concert by the young juniors, many of them clearly below both the poverty and the puberty levels.²¹ On the way back to the motherhouse, the coach stopped at the summit of Mount Corvo overlooking Lake Albano and the papal palace at Castel Gandolfo. On returning to Rome, the coach stopped at the Janiculum Hill for a panoramic view of the Eternal City. Despite a very full day, the American group, ever determined to be fully prepared, met after dinner that evening for one last caucus before the formal opening of the Chapter.²²

Formal Opening of the Chapter

The ceremonies to mark the official start of the Chapter began on April 27 with a Mass of the Holy Spirit. In the opening assembly in the

chapter hall, more than an hour had to be spent playing games with the electronic devices; neither the capitulants nor the technicians seemed able on the first try to get them to work properly. In his address, Brother Nicet-Joseph, the Superior, sensitive to the protests over the precapitular commissions on documents and the formation of chapter commissions, took full responsibility for trying to get some of the organizational work out of the way beforehand. In a strong and noble statement he assured the delegates that he and the Assistants recognized the body of the Chapter as the supreme authority in the Institute.²³ The Superior then read greetings to the Chapter from groups and individuals from around the world, many of them from outside the Institute. One of the most impressive was a lengthy reflection from Roger Schütz, the Prior of the ecumenical center at Taizé.²⁴ The Commission entrusted with the notes and the Commission to verify the credentials of the delegates made their reports.



39th General Chapter, First Session. Brother Nicet-Joseph the Superior General presides at an early assembly. To his left is Brother Placido, elected Commissary,* and Brothers Sylvain, John, Ambroise, and Pablo, elected moderators. To his right are Brothers Bernard Buong and Bautista Fernando, elected secretaries, and Brother Bartholomew Edwin, Secretary General.

*Commissary: one delegated by a superior to execute a duty or an office.

On the evening of April 27, the Chapter received a formal visit from Cardinal Antoniutti, the Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, who spoke on the duty of the capitulants to renew the Institute according to the norms established in the documents of Vatican II, especially *Perfectae caritatis*, the Decree on Religious Life. In his talk, he put strong emphasis on the option to have some Brothers ordained to the priesthood, going so far as to suggest that to refuse the option would be an act of disobedience to the mind of the Church. The talk was greeted with only perfunctory applause and created a certain malaise among the delegates. This matter will be dealt with further on in this narrative.²⁵



39th General Chapter, First Session. Delegates in the Chapter Hall seated according to seniority. The experts are in the last row. To the rear at the right are the three glass-enclosed booths for the Brothers doing the simultaneous translation.

Rules of Procedure and Election of Officers

The most important item of business in the early days of the Chapter, and one that would eventually make this and subsequent Chapters different from any in the past, was the introduction of a structure of

elected officers and fixed rules of procedure. This had been a matter of high priority among the American delegates from their very first meeting in Plano. The new officers, including elected moderators to chair the meetings, were modeled on those that had been employed in Vatican II; the Rules of Procedure were rather close to Robert's *Rules of Order*, a clue that the hand of Brother D. John of Baltimore had been involved, an influence that the Bulletin of the Chapter frankly admits.

The booklet containing the Rules of Procedure (in French, *Règlement*), was so well prepared and presented to the assembly that it was accepted readily with only a few modifications. Not all of the delegates seemed at first to realize what they were voting for. Carefully regulated rules of debate, with discussion of only one motion at a time, a time limit on interventions, and other such restrictions on rhetoric, digression, and improvisation, were totally new to most of the members, except of course for the Americans, who had an initial edge. It took some time for the others to catch up. The Bulletin of May 3 put it rather well:

The Règlement [sic] is not yet working to perfection due to the subtleties of the system, unfamiliar to most delegates; but even so, the order that is evident under this system is very gratifying. Opinions are expressed freely and the integrity of the Assembly is carefully watched and guarded. When the system is departed from, then trouble follows, and the morass in which the Chapter is trapped on such occasions proves that it is a blessing. Those who were at the last Chapter remark, in despair or joy, how different this one is.²⁶

The despair, or at least the frustration, was evident when some dignified ancient was told that his time was up, often when he had barely warmed up with what he intended as only an introduction to his remarks. Some of the more aggressive types were startled to be called out of order when they suggested a counter-motion to the motion on the floor. Eventually, however, as the Bulletin says, the procedure worked well. Everyone had an equal chance to be heard, but those who had done their homework were in the best position to argue their case effectively.

The role of the Superior General as *ex officio* president of the general assembly was to be largely honorary and ceremonial. The overall responsibility for the smooth running of the Chapter was entrusted to a Central Commission presided over by an elected general chairman, or *Commissary*. The delegate elected to this office, who did

not quite live up to his reputation as the Spanish counterpart of Brother D. John, was Brother Placido, who had been principal of a high school in Barcelona. In addition to the Commissary, the Central Commission was composed of the Superior and the Secretary General *ex officio*, the four elected moderators, and a representative elected from each of the commissions. The function of the Central Commission was to determine the schedule, set the agenda, and keep the work of the other commissions moving forward.

The election of secretaries and moderators proceeded smoothly. Since the moderators would actually chair the meetings and serve, besides, on the Central Commission, extensive informal discussion beforehand helped to assure that qualified and broadly representative delegates were chosen as moderators. Those elected were Brothers Sylvain Bonenfant from Montreal, D. John from Baltimore, Ambrose from Le Puy in France, and Pablo Manuel from Bilbao in Spain. The four proved to be an effective team. The presence among them of Brother John, the architect of the Rules of Procedure, provided them with authority in presiding over the debate and with authentic solutions when the parliamentary procedure became entangled, as it sometimes did.

The ground work of any General Chapter is done in the various commissions where the reports and notes to the Chapter are reviewed and sifted, new suggestions proposed and discussed, and propositions prepared for discussion and vote by the general assembly. The commissions for this Chapter were seven: Commission I on Vows; Commission II on Apostolic Life and Finality;²⁷ Commission III on Formation; Commission IV on Community and Religious Life; Commission V on Government; Commission VI on Finance; Commission VII on the Revision of the Rule. Later in the session, when it was evident that Commission II could not give adequate attention to the Missions, Commission VIII was formed for that purpose.

The US delegates distributed themselves among the various commissions so as to have a maximum impact despite their small numbers. Brother Raphael elected to work on Vows, Brothers Thomas and Luke on Finality, Brothers Erminus Joseph and Basil on Formation, Brother Anthony Joseph on Community, Brothers Gabriel, Jerome, and Philip on Government, Brother John on Finance, Brothers Leo and Paul on the Rule.²⁸

After the commissions were formed, they proceeded to elect their own officers. The Americans had decided earlier that because of the language problem, it would be better if they did not seek election as commission president or secretary. But it did seem appropriate, once the president and secretary had been chosen from among the "Fran-

cophones," to suggest that an American be elected as the commission representative on the Central Commission.

When the results of the elections within the commissions became known, five out of the seven commissions had elected an American as their representative on the Central Commission. Brother Placido, the Commissary, had to go scurrying from commission to commission trying to persuade some of the Americans to resign. Some did so in order not to give the impression that the delegates from the United States were trying to control the Chapter through the Central Commission.²⁹



39th General Chapter, First Session. Meeting of the Central Commission. Visible clockwise from the left are Brother Noberto, Visitor of Peru; the author; Brother Edwin, Secretary General; Brother Pablo; and Brother Nicet-Joseph, the Superior General.

Once the elections were over, the first test of the will of the Chapter to determine its own affairs came with a discussion on the daily prayer schedule. It had been presumed that the community exercises prescribed by Rule would be followed to the letter without regard for the nature and the demands of Chapter work, or the possibility that the Rule itself might be revised in this matter. The schedule called for a full hour devoted to vocal and mental prayer before morning Mass, followed by three decades of the rosary recited in

common. At noon there was examen and three more decades. In the evening a half hour of spiritual reading was followed by a half hour of mental prayer.

The work schedule provided for four meetings³⁰ of an hour and a half each day, either in general assembly or in commission. The main meal was served at 1:00 p.m., followed by a siesta. A coffee break came in mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Supper was at 8:00 p.m., followed by community recreation and night prayer. Sunday all day, except for solemn Mass in mid-morning, and Thursday afternoon were free; Saturday was a full work day. The "weekend mentality" had not yet penetrated Via Aurelia.

It did not take long for the delegates to rebel against the exhausting routine. After only a week, on May 2, the Central Commission proposed an alternate and mildly reduced horarium. One of the afternoon meetings was suppressed to allow for reading and informal gatherings. The morning rosary was to be said privately during the meditation period before Mass, with the option of walking outside the chapel; the evening spiritual reading was eliminated in view of the nature of the chapter work. Many of the old guard, including the Superior himself, argued vehemently that although the Chapter might reapportion the time for the community exercises, it could not in any way reduce the amount of time allotted to them in the Rule, much less suppress any of them. In particular, the substitution of the community rosary after Mass by private recitation was viewed as unprecedented and ominous.

The Chapter's will not to be held by such legalisms was tested by the vote, which overwhelmingly favored the reduced schedule. It was then that the delegates experienced for the first time on a concrete issue that the Chapter, and not any Superior or group of superiors, had control over its decisions and its destiny.³¹

The question of admitting experts or *periti* created very little difficulty in principle. The French delegates were as anxious as the Americans to have their experts present at the Chapter. On May 3, after consulting with the other commissions, the Rule Commission presented a list of 15 names as prospective experts.³² Ten were finally voted. Among them were theologians, Brothers Michel Sauvage (French) and Saturnino Gallego (Spanish); catechetical leaders, Vincent Ayel (French) and Aloysius Meldan (Austrian); psychologists, Paul Wilson (US) and Paul Grieger (French, teaching in Rome); educators, Marie (Belgium) and Henrique Justo (Brazil); and biblical scholars, Anselmo (Italian) and Thomas Ryan (US, studying in Rome).³³

During the discussion on the experts, two incidents occurred that were somewhat embarrassing, but not without a tinge of humor. Noting that only Brother Michel Sauvage had been identified by his secular name, one delegate (Irish) insisted on knowing the religious name before the vote. The moderator said that the candidate's Visitor was present and might supply it, which he did. Thus Brother Michel Sauvage was revealed to be in reality Brother Flavian-Marie (or vice versa).³⁴

The American group had proposed Brother Joel Damian as an expert in finance. When the name was presented, Brother I. Philip, who was his Visitor, rose to inform the delegates that the candidate was a fine Brother, indeed his Auxiliary Visitor, but was in no way an expert in finance. It was an embarrassing moment for the Americans, with surprise and disappointment as well.³⁵ Part of the strategy had been to bring Brother Damian to Rome to help communicate news of the Chapter back to the States. But then, Brother Philip, a known maverick,³⁶ had shown no interest in meetings to develop a common strategy. He seemed to have an agenda of his own. He did not return to the Second Session of the Chapter the following year; his replacement was none other than Brother Joel Damian.

The final stage in the process of organization was to hear the reports of the Superior General on the state of the Institute, the Vicar General on the revision of the Rules, and the Secretary General on the Institute statistics. In retrospect, the report of the Secretary General is fascinating. As of December, 1965, there were 16,824 Brothers in the Institute, 13,076 of whom were perpetually professed. Yet signs of what was to come were already apparent in the houses of formation: there were 1,171 novices throughout the world, which represented a decline of 208 from the previous year; the number of junior novices had also declined by 235 from the previous year, although this represented a smaller percentage of the 6,774 total.³⁷

The meetings in general assembly during the first two weeks of the Chapter, although occupied with organizational matters and official reports, served admirably to set a certain tone, a sense of freedom combined with responsibility to use the innovative procedures for the renewal of the Institute and its adaptation to the contemporary world. During this time, also, the schedule provided for the commissions to get busy preparing their reports for presentation to the general assembly. It was not very long before at least some of the commissions were ready to present for discussion, amendment, and vote, the substantive business confronting the Chapter. The manner in which those issues were dealt with is described in the section that follows.

Notes

1. Copy of the Bulletin in ANYD.
2. As the session went along, the secrecy of the vote was compromised by the way in which the electronic scanner counted the votes and displayed the count in progress. As the scanner picked up the votes there was an audible click. The first series of clicks came in rapid succession, followed by a short delay. This was followed by three clicks, then three more, then one final click. It soon occurred to some astute delegates that the machine was scanning from the front of the hall to the rear, then it picked up the vote of the three moderators, the three secretaries, and finally the vote from the presidential desk. Watching the vote on controversial issues was something like being at a horse race. Since the delegates were seated according to seniority, the conservative vote would always take a commanding lead. But as the scan got to the center of the hall, the more liberal vote would begin to catch up and usually surpass the initial totals. The system was altered before the second session to assure a random scan of the vote.
3. Pictures and brief biographies of all the delegates can be found in the BFEC, 186 (July 1966).
4. The BFEC, 186, pp. 183–185, contains an interesting interview with Brother Denis, who was a capitulant at the General Chapter for the fifth time, his first being the Chapter of 1928 held at Lembecq.
5. GCNB, March 10, 1966.
6. In some listings, these delegates are placed with their Districts or country of origin. Thus the Superior, the Econome General, and the Director of the motherhouse would be listed with France; the retired Vicar and the Procurator with Belgium; and the Secretary General with the United States. These officers are more truly representative of the entire Institute at the center, rather than any national group.
7. See the previous note regarding the Secretary General, who was Brother Bartholomew Edwin Arandez from the United States. Brother Edwin was permanently stationed in Rome and did not participate in the meetings of the American delegates before or during the Chapter.
8. This analysis is based on a list of the capitulants and elected delegates sent from Rome by Brother Philip Milligan, then Director of the Lasallianum, to Brother Anthony Joseph, Visitor of the LI-NE District. In a cover letter dated January 26, 1966, Brother Philip describes the reluctance of the officials in the motherhouse to release the list. After being put off by the Secretary General, and failing by more indirect approaches, he was finally able to borrow the calendar book of the Director General of the motherhouse, who had been given the list in order to prepare and assign accommodations for the delegates. Copy for distribution in ANYD.
9. See "Verification of Mandates" in Circular 387, October 11, 1966, pp.6–7. In the BFEC, 186, pp. 185–187, an interview with Brother Cristovao records his impressions as the youngest delegate.
10. See "Classification of Notes," *ibid.*, pp. 4–5.
11. The italics are not in the original GCNB. The author and others thought they might as well have been.
12. The author notes in his diary for Tues 4/19, "AM meeting with BCH—briefing on state of affairs in M[other] H[ouse]."

13. The text of the conference was not made available. The implied dichotomy between spirituality and apostolic work sticks in the memory of the author, who was present.

14. The Brother in question was the author.

15. The author notes in his diary for Thursday, April 21, "The schedule is real old fashioned talking to death. EXO's [religious exercises] 6 to 8 - EXO's 9:30 to 12:30 - Office at 3:00 - EXO's 4:30 to 8:00 p.m. - with aimless walking around in between Rain for 2 days adds to the grim aspect of things. Personally, tho, I'm merely tired but serene." Ms. in ANYD.

16. The author notes in his diary for Saturday, April 23, "The priest and the S.G. seem to be combining forces to answer in advance all the modern objections to the religious life and the way it is lived. They are strong on the love of God, consecration, obedience, prayer etc. They are very qualified on freedom and the apostolate. Too individualistic approach to piety, I think." Ms. in ANYD.

17. The best time for this was the traditional "Recreation of Rule" after the noon and evening meal, which was allowed after the first days of the retreat. The author notes in his diary for April 23, "First recreation with BCH and it turned into a caucus." Ms. in ANYD.

18. See the entry in the author's diary for Monday, April 25. Ms. in ANYD. According to Brother Charles Henry, when Brother Nicet-Joseph was consulted by the Vatican, he referred the matter to Brother Lawrence O'Toole, the Irish Assistant. Brother Lawrence had no objection since the FSC in his assistancy were known as the De La Salle Brothers. Apparently it did not occur to the Superior to consult with the Assistant for the United States, where the FSC have been known as the Christian Brothers and conduct institutions bearing that name. In recent years, the FSC in the United States have begun to call themselves the De La Salle Christian Brothers.

19. See the diary entry of the author, dated April 25. Ms. in ANYD.

20. This attitude is apparent in the *Notes pris lors d'une causerie du T.C.F. Vicaire Général Philip-Antoon*, duplicated and circulated with the approval of the Vicar General. Copy in ANYD. Similar concern to mitigate the demand for change can be found in Circular 379, and in the text of a conference on dialogue given by the Superior on April 22, 1966, during the retreat that preceded the Chapter. Copy in ANYD.

21. The author notes in his diary for Tuesday, April 26, "The very baby-looking juniors sang Italian songs afterwards with an out of tune FSC orchestra and an overly vigorous conductor." Ms. in ANYD.

22. The author notes in his diary for April 26, which happened to be his birthday, "At a post-dinner meeting we finally agreed on Paul Wilson as our candidate for *peritus*—no other nomination as yet. Letter from Al Clark and a drink with Gabe made it a happy birthday indeed." Ms. in ANYD.

23. The author in his diary for Wednesday, April 27, after describing the statement on the freedom of the Chapter as "strong and noble," adds the remark, "I think he means it, too." Ms. in ANYD.

24. The complete text was published in Circular 387.

25. The author notes in his diary for April 27, "Then came Cardinal Antoniutti of SCR—after pleasantries and generalities he made a strong point re priesthood and set the place humming again on that topic. . . . Much excitement later over what the Cardinal's speech implied." Ms. in ANYD.

26. GCNB, May 3, 1966, p. 3.

27. The word "finality" as a literal translation of the French is ambiguous in English. "Purpose" would be a better translation, but yielded to "finality" even in the English-language discussions. The word refers to the aim, the end-product, the reason for which the Institute exists. Finality in this sense will be a major theme in the narrative to follow, as will the work of Commission II, the "Finality Commission."

28. The complete list of the commissions with the delegates assigned to them is in Circular 387, pp. 17–20.

29. The author was elected as representative from Commission II to the Central Commission. In his diary for Saturday, April 30, he writes, "Commission on Finality elected me as delegate to the Central Commission. After dividing into sub-commissions . . . I was called out. Br. Placido, Commisar, asks me to resign from Central Commission because there were too many Americans, one Frenchman, and many countries not represented. Raph [Bodin, Visitor of NO-SF on Commission I] had already resigned. I said call E. Joe and let it be one or another but not both. Joe yielded but only in favor of Oliver [Aux. Visitor of Ireland]. I refused . . . After dinner and consulting with D. John, I decided to reconsider, lest we offend and lose major battles. But the Commission refused [my resignation] in resentment over the interference and in opposition to these considerations of balance, groups etc." Ms. in ANYD.

30. The French term for an individual sitting or meeting is *séance*, which translated literally into English has another meaning. "Session," both in English and French, technically refers to an entire series of meetings without adjournment. Thus there were two "sessions" of the 39th General Chapter and only one session for the 40th and the 41st. The word meeting or assembly will be used henceforth to translate *séance*, that is, a sitting of about 45 minutes duration in the chapter hall.

31. There is no mention of this significant discussion and vote, which was in effect an assertion of the Chapter's independence of the incumbent authorities, either in the Circular or in the General Chapter News Bulletin. A copy of the revised scheduled with annotations of the vote is in ANYD. The author notes in his diary for Mon. 5/2, "Despite impassioned pleas from Regime and Bautista, Vis. Gen., it was voted to say beads privately during last ten minutes before Mass. A major crisis! the THF [Superior General] seemed like a beaten man." The symbolic option of saying the rosary in private during the morning meditation period while walking outside the chapel carried by 67 votes in favor, 45 against, and 4 abstentions. The vote to suppress the meeting originally scheduled at 3:30 p.m. daily was "almost unanimous," according to the notation in the author's hand on his copy of the proposal.

32. There was a dramatic conflict between the Central Commission and the Superior over the decision to present 15 names. The Superior, wanting to "limit the experiment," insisted that Brother Damase-Jean, Assistant, be allowed to make a motion to accept only the original ten. The Central Commission agreed, if he would divide his motion, which he did. Part One, to limit the number of experts to ten, passed. Part Two, to accept only the original ten, failed—another example of where the freedom of the delegates prevailed over the expressed desires of the Superior. When the list of 15 came to the floor, it was decided to eliminate 5 names, one by one, and then vote on the remaining 10. The only one of the original ten to be rejected was Brother Joel Damian, who was replaced by Brother Aloysius Meldan. A full account of the

squabble is in the author's diary for Tuesday and Wednesday, April 3 and 4. Ms. in ANYD.

33. Only the names (usually the religious names) and country of origin are listed in Circular 387, p. 15. The names given in the text are those by which these Brothers became known once the religious names were abandoned. Unfortunately, some years later, both the American experts left the Institute.

34. A personal recollection of the author.

35. Ibid.

36. The personality of Brother Philip Matthews is captured to some extent in the biography by Michael Witt entitled *I. Phil* and published by the Saint Louis District in 1987. Unfortunately, the book is seriously flawed by many factual and typographical errors.

37. Copy in ANYD.

3

The 39th General Chapter First Session (1966): The Issues

Once the organizational matters were out of the way and the Chapter was free to pursue its own course, the commissions got down to the serious business of determining priorities among the many serious matters that had to be dealt with. Uppermost in the minds of the delegates were the revision of the Rule decreed by the previous Chapter, subsidiarity in government, and the option offered by the Vatican Council to ordain some Brothers to the priesthood. The delegates were keenly aware as well that they had the responsibility to elect a new Superior General and the members of his administrative team. Although it was realized from the beginning that the agenda might not be completed in one session, it is astonishing that all of these matters, and some others besides, were at least addressed during the two months that the session lasted.

The Rule and Constitutions

In the decade between 1956 and 1965, the revision of the Rule and Constitutions¹ had occupied the attention of a large segment of the Institute. After collecting and sifting responses from all the Districts, the Commission of the Regime had prepared a third "project" of a draft Rule, known as P. 3, which was sent to all the delegates just prior to the opening of the Chapter.

Meanwhile, in December, 1965, Vatican II had come to an end, and the superiors thought it wise to send the Draft to Father Beyer, SJ, Dean of the Canon Law faculty at the Gregorian University and a specialist in the religious life. Father Beyer happened also to be a friend of Brother Philip-Antoon, the Vicar General and Chairman of the Commission of the Regime.

Father Beyer did not hesitate to express his unfavorable opinion of P. 3: "You have drawn up a Rule attuned to the norms in force prior to the Council. Ever since the Council, the Congregation for Religious has adopted other guidelines that are less exclusively juridical and more spiritual." Father Beyer went even farther. Having already written Rules in the new style for the Brothers of Charity of Gand, he

undertook to prepare some sample chapters of a Rule for the Lasallian Institute.

The Regime agreed with the criticisms of Father Beyer, but they politely declined his offer to compose a Rule for them. Since time was running out, the superiors decided to entrust the composition of a fourth draft (P. 4), written in a totally different style, to Brothers Aubert-Joseph and Michel Sauvage.² The two Brothers, both exemplary for their intensity and dedication, set to work at a furious pace. The fourth draft was ready to be distributed to the capitulants during the retreat that preceded the opening of the Chapter.³ Thereupon the study of the revision of the Rule was entrusted to Commission VII of the Chapter.

That Commission brought its first report to the Chapter on Friday morning, May 13. The discussion that ensued centered on two issues: whether there should be a prologue to the Rule, and how to distinguish between the rules and the constitutions.⁴

In a memorable intervention, made in his capacity as a *peritus*, Brother Michel Sauvage argued for a preamble to the Rule, addressed to the postulant in the tradition of Saint Benedict, welcoming him, encouraging him to see in the Rule an expression of the Gospel and an aid to live in freedom a life dominated by charity. He then proposed a possible text; herewith are some excerpts.

On love: “. . . never forget that the words of the Rule will hold no meaning for you if your heart is no longer devoured by love. May this book be for you, not a constraint but a stimulus, not a fence you fear to break through, but an open road you have chosen to walk upon.”

On the Gospel: It is “the first and principal Rule.” “Only when you are capable of rediscovering the prescriptions of your Bible as the fruit of daily prayer will you be able to understand fully the meaning and the wisdom contained in your Rule.”

On freedom: “Above all else, strive to be a free man: free from the slavery of sin and self-seeking, free from any sort of legalism. Make yourself responsive to the Spirit of Christ.”

On being human: “By entering the Institute of the Brothers, you do not renounce being human, nor do you refuse to serve the earthly city. You commit yourself to an Institute which works to promote human welfare. The Rule will help you render this service effectively.”⁵

Brother Michel read his prologue with such passion and conviction that it evoked a wave of spontaneous applause. More important,

it effected a mind-set in the capitulants, who seemed to realize at last the kind of language and emphasis they expected in the revised Rule.

On the distinction between the rules and constitutions, the propositions eventually voted expressed it thus:

The rules should be a practical interpretation of the Gospel, and of the theological norms and general principles of the religious life. They will thus help the Brothers to follow Christ by fulfilling their apostolic mission as a community, in a spirit of fidelity to the holy Founder.

The constitutions should comprise the universal practical applications that derive from the Rule.⁶

These and similar directives were then given to the Rule Commission to guide its work in preparing yet another draft of the revised Rule. The process of revision thus entered a new stage that would come to full fruition only twenty years later with the definitive approval of the Rule of the Institute in 1987.

Subsidiarity in Government

If the revision of the Rule had been a preoccupation of the superiors ever since the Chapter of 1956, the issue that seemed to emerge from a ground swell throughout the Institute was the need to decentralize the structures of its government. The need was felt in different ways in different places. In the United States, the Visitors, and indeed the American Assistants, had a long history, beginning with the Latin question, of receiving negative response from the central administration to even the most innocent requests for adaptation to local cultural situations, problems, and opportunities. In other parts of the world, the problem seemed to be with the Assistants who exercised something close to total control over the Brothers in their territories, including and perhaps especially the local superiors, the Visitors and Directors, who were effectively denied any real authority or initiative. The response of the superiors to all of this, in their rhetoric and apologetic, was that they were themselves merely obeying the Rule to which all were bound, and doing their duty by enforcing it.

The letters sent to the US delegates before the Chapter provided evidence that Brothers everywhere were hoping for some kind of radical change. One of the Americans, writing before the Chapter from the Rome Second Novitiate, described the mood in these terms:

This is a very thorny problem, and I hope the American delegation will be prepared to discuss it. Ask anyone over here what

they want from the Chapter, and the word is “decentralization.” If you press them to find out just what they want, you usually find they don’t know. A Frenchman will say the Visitor and the Directors should have more power, the Assistant less. A Spanish Brother will want more power for the Assistant. An American will say just put in writing what we already do. A missionary will say we need one Assistant for the missions with great authority to change our working conditions. But none of these people has any detailed idea of just what powers they want to give to whom.⁷

Once the Chapter was underway, the changes set in motion by Vatican II and the thrust of its documents gave reason to think that a solid theological base might exist to support the idea of decentralization. The more democratic procedures introduced in the early days of the Chapter, and the prevailing optimism, lent hope that the movement to restructure the government of the Institute might succeed.



39th General Chapter. Meeting of Commission V working on the Book of Government. Brother Maurice Anglim, who joined the Commission as an observer during the Second Session, is seated at the left. Next to him are the veterans, Brothers Martial Robert, Gabriel Costello, Jerome West, Richard Allen (English Assistant), and delegates from Venezuela, Belgium, Holland, and France.

The study of issues pertaining to government was entrusted to Commission V, whose elected president was the dynamic and forward-looking Canadian, Brother Olymphe-Georges, well known to many Americans from his visits to the States and the open style of the long retreats he conducted in Canada. Impressed by the well-documented position paper on subsidiarity prepared by the trio from Manhattan College, Brothers Gabriel Costello, Luke Salm, and Gabriel

Moran,⁸ Brother Georges invited Brother Luke to address the Chapter on Thursday, May 12, in a general assembly sponsored by the Government Commission on the topic of subsidiarity.

It was an exhilarating experience for the eager and rotund Brother Luke, one of the youngest delegates, to stand in front of the chapter hall with chalk in hand at an improvised blackboard, eyeball-to-eyeball with all the superiors and senior Brothers seated in the front rows.⁹

Brother Luke began by softening up his audience with quotations from the popes, the Council, and Sacred Scripture. He stressed the sentence in John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra*: "Experience shows that where private initiative of individuals is lacking, political tyranny prevails." The heart of the presentation, derived largely from Moran's development in the position paper, was an analysis of how power and authority relate to obedience. In corrupt form, authority becomes power, power becomes absolute control, and obedience becomes servility. In gospel terms, on the other hand, authority fosters dialogue, power is an attribute of God's love, and obedience becomes the mature freedom of the baptized as children of God.¹⁰

The presentation was well received, even if its implications were not completely understood. Brother Denis, the retired Vicar General, was heard to say to one of the old Assistants: "That was marvelous! I never knew there was so much support in Scripture and the popes for subsidiarity." Then he added, pounding his fists, "Now all we have to do is to elect some good strong superiors to put it into effect!"¹¹

The practical consequence was all that could be desired. After some discussion in general assembly, the Government Commission set to work to create the structures that would embody the principle and make it workable. In a later meeting, prior to the election of the new Assistants, the Commission presented the following resolution to the assembly for discussion and vote: "The General Chapter adopts the principle of subsidiarity in the government of the Institute." The motion carried by a vote of 112 in favor, 3 against, and 1 abstention.¹²

The Debate on the Priesthood

Although the question of ordaining some Brothers to the priesthood, especially for priestly ministry in their own schools and communities, had arisen from time to time in the Institute, the movement in this direction received a fresh impetus from one of the statements in *Perfectae caritatis*, the Decree on Religious Life of Vatican II:

This sacred Synod declares that there is no objection to religious congregations of brothers admitting some members to holy orders, to supply needed priestly ministrations for their own houses, provided that the lay character of the congregation remains unchanged and that it is the general chapter that makes the decision.¹³

There is reason to believe that the initiative for this statement came from members of Brothers' institutes, including and perhaps especially some Italian Lasallians. They succeeded during the Council in persuading bishops from areas where there was a shortage of priests to have the option included in the conciliar decree. It seems that the statement in the original schema was worded much more strongly, including even a reference to this option as the express wish of the Holy Father. The papal endorsement had to be excised, but the option of the priesthood for Brothers' institutes remained.¹⁴

Coming just before the opening of the General Chapter, this conciliar decree opened the proverbial can of worms within the Lasallian Institute. The debate had erupted during 1965 when position papers favoring the acceptance of the priesthood began to circulate in Europe. The issue became a lively one, especially in Italy, where it promoted much discussion among the Brothers attending the Rome Second Novitiate. Apparently an attempt was made to suppress both the papers and the discussion. In October 1965, the Visitor of the District of Rome, who was known to favor the priesthood, was replaced. The Brothers in the Rome District responded by electing the deposed Visitor, Brother Manfredo, as a delegate to the Chapter.¹⁵ Once the Americans delegates arrived in Rome, they were consistently wooed, without success it might be added, by the Brothers from communities in and around Rome who regularly visited the motherhouse to lobby for the cause.

The French Brothers, meanwhile, gathered their forces in opposition. Some of them had raised the issue in their replies to the inquiries from the Americans prior to the Chapter. Thus the Visitor of Besançon wrote:

I would like to touch on a point which you did not mention, but which, I imagine, we have similar views on. I am speaking of the question of the priesthood. I imagine that you are well aware of the manner in which the text relative to the priesthood was introduced into the conciliar decree on the religious life. It is due to the intrigue of certain of our Brothers . . . who found favorable ears in certain Bishops lacking priests, particularly among the Romans.¹⁶

The author of the letter goes on to argue strongly against the priesthood as an option for the Institute, with special emphasis on the problem of clericalization in the Church.

The issue was brought to the fore from the very start of the Chapter on the opening day, April 27. That evening the delegates assembled to hear an address by Cardinal Antoniutti, the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, as it was then called. The Cardinal summarized and interpreted the main lines of the program of adaptation and renewal in religious life proposed by the Vatican Council. In the course of his address, he highlighted the possibility, opened by the Council, for lay institutes of men to have some members ordained priests for ministry within the congregation. Both in his prepared text and in his asides, he urged the capitulants in the strongest possible terms to accept the option of the priesthood. "How could you possibly," he asked, "as obedient sons of the Church, refuse this greatest gift that she offers to you?" He all but said, as much by his tone and his asides as by his formal text, that the Chapter was obliged to accept that proposal. In fact, the delegates who favored the priesthood tried to interpret it that way. Only polite applause at the end indicated most of the delegates resented this apparent attempt to force the issue.¹⁷

The reaction of the capitulants was generally negative to this untoward intervention on a sensitive and disputed matter. The Superior seemed distressed by it, and refused the request of one of the capitulants to have the Cardinal's text duplicated and distributed to the delegates. As subsequent events showed, this proved to be not a very wise decision. Neither was the account of the event in the Chapter News Bulletin:

The most outstanding event so far was the visit of the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, his Eminence, Cardinal Antoniutti. A visit of protocol is rather routine in the Motherhouse, [sic] but this one took on greater meaning, considering the times through which we are passing. His message followed a pattern that was generally expected. He developed the general lines of the decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, without omitting the passage of which he is thought to be the author. It is apparent that he likes his work, so who would blame him?¹⁸

The most fully developed argumentation against the option for the priesthood came in a position paper prepared by Brother Michel Sauvage and distributed to the chapter delegates. It is entitled *Que penser d'une éventuelle introduction du sacerdoce dans l'Institute des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes?* Brother Michel's negative answer to the

question is argued in 15 single-spaced pages under three headings that are, in fact, three theses that he defends:

1. The introduction of the priesthood into the Institute of the Brothers would constitute a transformation "touching a substantial and characteristic element" of that Institute.
2. The specific vocation and the limited mission of the Institute of the Brothers presumes the retention of its exclusively lay character.
3. Reflections of a practical order [leading to the same conclusion].¹⁹

Both as an expert called to the Chapter, and later as elected Assistant, Brother Michel was an influential voice in the discussions of the Commission on Apostolic Life and Finality that had been charged to study the question. During the Vatican Council Brother Michel had participated in the preparation of the Decree on Religious Life in his role as *peritus*, and this experience lent weight to his interpretation of the council text in the light of its history.

In the commission discussion, it was evident from the start that most members were opposed to the introduction of the priesthood in any form. However, full liberty was given to those who wanted to speak in favor: the Italian delegate, who represented the viewpoint of a large number of Italian Brothers; one of the Spaniards, a very intense Brother, who argued that the Brothers could best influence their young students by hearing their confessions in addition to classroom instruction; and the Brother from Vietnam, who thought that the option should be available on a limited basis in very special circumstances, such as those prevailing in some countries in Asia.

In addition, all the notes submitted to the Chapter from Brothers around the world were read and studied. Altogether 186 notes asked for the priesthood and 242 opposed it. Of those in favor, 27 were written in French (not necessarily from France, where the opposition was strong), 28 in English, 57 in Spanish, and 74 in Italian. Of those opposed, 27 were written in French, 31 in Spanish, 160 in English, and 24 in Italian. It was observed that most of the notes, on one side or the other, came from the Districts where the question had been an issue; many Districts did not send a single note on the question.²⁰ The notes gave little evidence of institute-wide support for taking up the priesthood option.

During the discussion in commission, it was evident that the Italian delegate was regularly on the phone, communicating the progress of the debate to the Brothers in the Roman communities. There was reason to believe that either directly or indirectly the authorities in the

Congregation for Religious were being briefed as well. Subsequent events would show that this was so.

On Saturday, May 14, in a late afternoon meeting, the final report, rejecting the priesthood option, was ready for the commission vote. The preliminary vote showed 18 in favor of rejecting the priesthood option, with 5 opposed.

That evening, the vigil of the feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, the mayor of Rome invited the members of the Chapter to come to the Campidoglio for a solemn civic celebration of the Chapter. Three cardinals were to be present, as well as all the Brothers living in Rome and its environs.²¹ The coaches hired to take the capitulants to the ceremony were kept waiting until the Apostolic Finality Commission finished its debate and vote on the priesthood. When the delegates arrived at the capitol only twenty minutes later, they learned from an American Brother, who was living in a Brothers' community in Rome, that the news was already out; the Romans even knew the exact vote in the Commission. From the cool reception given the delegates as they entered the hall for the ceremony, it was obvious that the local Brothers were unhappy at the news.²²

The feast of the Founder was celebrated in the motherhouse with appropriate solemnity on Sunday, May 15. The pontifical Mass was celebrated by Bishop Le Huu Tu, uncle of one of the delegates, Brother Bernard Buong, Visitor of Saigon.²³ The Julian choir from the Vatican provided the music. That evening, Augustin Cardinal Bea came to meet the capitulants and to preside at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

In the general assembly on Monday, May 16, there was a feeling that something was wrong. The Superior, for example, reminded the delegates of the oath they had taken to be discreet. He also announced that Archbishop Paul Philippe, Secretary of the Congregation for Religious, would visit the Chapter and preside at the elections. Rumors suggested that the Congregation had been told about the commission vote rejecting the priesthood. That evening, the Finality Commission met to vote on the final version of the report on the priesthood. This time, the final commission vote rejecting the priesthood option was 21 to 2. The report was then distributed to all the delegates, as required by the *Règlement*, at least 24 hours in advance of its presentation to the general assembly, which was foreseen for Wednesday, May 18. Monday May 16, as scheduled, was devoted to the report of the Commission on Finance. On Tuesday, May 17, the schedule called for work in commissions.

Unaware of the drama that was developing, several American delegates, including Brother Charles Henry, Assistant, and the Secre-

tary General, met in one of the parlors to be interviewed by Israel Schenker of *Time* magazine, who was preparing a feature article on the Brothers and renewal. The previous day, the Congregation of the Christian Brothers of Ireland had been interviewed.²⁴ The interview went quite well, except when Mr. Schenker asked to see a copy of the Rule then in force. He was told that none was available. (In the motherhouse?) This was a telling example of the closed mentality that had prevailed in the central administration.²⁵ The article, with photographs, appeared in *Time* a week or so later.²⁶

On Wednesday, May 18, at the 9:00 a.m. meeting, there was a vote to accept the proposal of a prologue to the revised Rule and to remove certain chapters dealing with specifics from the Rule to the Constitutions. It was expected that the report on the priesthood would follow. Instead, the Superior announced that Cardinal Antoniutti, the Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, had ordered that the Chapter suspend all other business and proceed at once to the election of a new Superior. The Circular notes: "This announcement caused no little consternation among the capitulants, the vast majority of whom were completely satisfied with the excellent progress of the Chapter under the leadership of the M. H. Brother."²⁷

The Central Commission had to meet hastily to decide on a new schedule. When the general assembly reconvened at 11:00 a.m. on May 18, it was proposed that Commission V accelerate its work on the Book of Government so as to define before the election the role of the new Superior, his term of office (up until then the Superior had been elected for life), and to give some idea of the kind of advisers or assistants he would have.

Brother Maurice-Auguste, the Procurator General with the Holy See, then explained to the delegates the background of the intervention of the Congregation and the frustration at not being able to explain or appeal. The Circular describes the sequence of events:

Then, on the 13th of May, after being received in audience by the Holy Father, the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation directed that the elections be held as soon as possible. On the 16th May the M.H. Brother Superior and the Brother Procurator secured an audience with the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation, who told them that the Cardinal was concerned about some reports that had been received, and that the elections should be held as soon as possible.²⁸

What the account in the Circular does not say, but the minutes do, is that on Tuesday, May 17, the Brother Procurator tried again to have the Superior meet with the Cardinal to explain the situation. The

audience was refused.²⁹ The Secretary, Archbishop Paul Philippe, OP, reminded the Brothers that any business conducted by the Chapter, apart from what was necessary to proceed with the election, would be considered by the Congregation as null and void. As previously announced, Archbishop Philippe himself had been assigned to preside at the election.

No one had any doubt that the reports concerned the action of the Apostolic Finality Commission rejecting the priesthood; that somehow the Vatican authorities had been given the impression that the Superior, Brother Nicet-Joseph, was unduly influencing the Commission, something he could not have done even if he had wanted to. Perhaps the Superior's refusal to circulate the Cardinal's opening talk was interpreted in the Vatican Congregation as bias.³⁰ A special issue of the Bulletin, entitled "Unexpected Acceleration" adds the following:

When we reassembled at 11:00 a.m. for the new time-table, an American representative, who is also a recognized Classical scholar, suggested that a letter be penned to the Sacred Congregation expressing our convictions, as representative of the vast bulk of the Institute, that we were working methodically and assiduously on the renewal of the Institute in accord with Vatican II and that we were surprised at this sudden intervention of the Sacred Congregation. The letter was penned by the Procurator, voted overwhelmingly by the Chapter and sent off.³¹

The "American Classical scholar" was, of course, Brother Charles Henry. The fact is that he did not merely suggest this course of action. In an impassioned intervention, the only one of any substance that he had made in the Chapter up until then, he demanded to know whether the delegates had merely to bow to the higher authority, or could they in some effective way protest the arbitrary action. The applause that followed bespoke the mind of the Chapter. The written protest, prepared by Brother Maurice was a model of forceful resentment in the guise of polite diplomatic language. One capitulant described it as a rose with the thorns carefully hidden but certain to draw blood. It was delivered the following day, which happened to be Ascension Thursday, when the Vatican offices were closed, to the residences of the Cardinal Prefect and the Archbishop Secretary of the Congregation by Brother Maurice, in his official capacity as Procurator, accompanied by the senior elected delegate, Brother Joathas-Simon from Madagascar.³² There was no reply to the protest, and the Chapter had no choice but to put aside all other business to concentrate on the election of the new Superior.

The Election of the Superior General

Long before the opening of the Chapter, the Brothers in the United States generally, and their elected delegates in particular, had considered Brother Charles Henry as a viable candidate for the office of Superior General. Their expectations were confirmed when letters from all over the world expressed an openness to the idea of an American Superior General, and specifically to the acceptability of Brother Charles. By the time the American delegates arrived in Rome, most of the speculation concerning the new Superior centered around the person of Brother Charles Henry.

The choice was a logical one. At the time, the Brothers in the United States were experiencing tremendous growth in numbers; they had developed high quality formation programs and their techniques for recruitment of candidates were meeting with success; they were deeply involved in the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II, especially in the new biblical, liturgical, and theological movements, and the concern to bring the Institute into the mainstream of contemporary life. Brother Charles stood as something of a symbol of all that was positive in this situation. He himself was highly educated, a well-trained classics scholar with a PhD degree; he had been Director of the university scholasticate in Washington and an ardent advocate of advanced theological and academic training for the Brothers; he had been the first Visitor of the new District of LI-NE, and had been successful in a fund-raising drive to build the novitiate and to provide a sound financial base for the District's apostolic works.

From within the Regime, or at least the staff of the motherhouse, whence superiors had traditionally been chosen, Brother Charles emerged as one of very few likely candidates. The only others that were seriously mentioned were Brother Philip-Antoon, the Belgian Vicar General, and Brother Aubert-Joseph, the youngest of the French Assistants. Brother Philip was handicapped by his identification with the old authority structure; Brother Aubert, by his abrupt manner and the poor image of the office of Assistant held by his constituents.

Once the Chapter was underway, the American delegates were unwilling to take anything for granted. Although it was strictly forbidden to engage in anything like a cabal, it was allowed to seek and to exchange relevant information on potential candidates.³³ Thus the Americans openly circulated a one-page *curriculum vitae* with a second page to describe some of the qualities and interests of Brother Charles.³⁴ The Spanish delegates took the good example and did

something similar for their candidate, Brother Pablo Manuel, as he was then called.³⁵ Even the incumbent superiors were not beyond letting their preference be known.³⁶ The younger French delegates at first seemed not to be able to agree on which candidate they preferred.³⁷

After the intervention of the Vatican Congregation, events moved swiftly. While the pace of informal contacts among the delegates increased, so also did the work in Commission V on the new government structure. At the morning assembly on Thursday, May 19, the propositions relative to the office of Superior were voted: the ordinary General Chapter would be held every ten years; the Superior would be elected for a term of ten years running from one chapter to the next; he would be eligible for reelection; the Vicar General would be the first counselor of the Superior with no territorial responsibility and with the right to succeed the Superior in the event of death or resignation. With these proposals voted, the election was set for the following Monday, May 23.

To fill out the picture of the new central administration, at the evening assembly on May 21 Brother Gabriel Costello, acting as reporter for the Commission, led a discussion on the proposed General Council. The new Council was to include four resident counselors and a larger number of territorial assistants, whose function would be stimulation and coordination rather than administration.³⁸

Meanwhile, on Friday, May 20, Brother Nicet-Joseph submitted his formal resignation to the Chapter. The Bulletin describes the occasion:

Last Friday, May 20, Brother Superior General Nicet Joseph announced that he had a letter of resignation to present to the Chapter. He left the Hall, while Brother Bartholomew Edwin read his letter—a masterpiece of restraint and good taste. He reminded the capitulants of the story of the tyrannical Mother Superior who finally offered her resignation, to the relief of all. But some kind nun, in order not to make it look too bad, decided to vote for her re-election; unfortunately the “some” became the majority to the dismay of all. He urged us to restrain that impulse. Brother Denis, the former Vicar General, urged us to accept the genuine plea to resign of the Most Honored Brother. It was thus that the Chapter acceded to the wishes of a great and holy man.³⁹

On the eve of the election, the American delegates calculated that a sufficient number had expressed themselves in favor of Brother Charles Henry to assure his election by a majority on the first ballot. The only question, how great the majority would be, depended on

how the French delegates would vote. It was learned that many of the French Brothers had abandoned their Assistant, Brother Aubert-Joseph, in favor of Brother Michel Sauvage. In casual conversation, some of them admitted that they did not expect Brother Michel to be elected Superior, but that they might vote for him on the first ballot to assess his chances for the post of Vicar General, and then vote for Brother Charles on the second ballot. By the time the day arrived, it was fairly apparent to all, with the possible exception of the old superiors who were said to favor Brother Philip-Antoon, that there would be no second ballot.⁴⁰

Foregone conclusion or not, the election was a dramatic event. Part of the drama came from the ceremony itself, modeled on the ritual of the conclave that elects the pope. Immediately after the morning Mass of the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in the motherhouse chapel, with residents assigned to adoration. The capitulants, fasting and in silence, went in procession to the chapter hall, where all other persons were excluded and the doors locked from the outside. After again invoking the Holy Spirit with the *Veni Creator* and a prolonged period of meditation, the delegates in turn, bowing before the crucifix, pronounced aloud the required oath⁴¹ and then deposited the written ballot in a box prepared for the purpose. All earlier discussion and political considerations aside, each delegate was left in the solitude of his own conscience to vote for the candidate he deemed most likely to work for the glory of God and the good of the Institute.



39th General Chapter, First Session. During the course of the election of the new Superior, Archbishop Paul Philippe, from the Congregation for Religious, had supplanted Brother Nicet-Joseph in the President's chair.

On this occasion, the drama was heightened by the presence of Archbishop Paul Philippe, OP, the Secretary General of the Congregation for Religious. A special throne with a prie-dieu had been erected for him to one side at the front of the chapter hall, where he looked imposing, almost papal, in his white Dominican habit, with contrasting broad violet sash and zucchetto to designate his rank. Once the prayer period was over, however, descending from his improvised throne, he none too gently displaced Brother Nicet-Joseph from the president's chair facing the assembly and, with Book of Government in hand, assumed himself the presidential role. It was a tense moment, and did nothing to improve the chances that the Chapter would yield to the strategies of the Congregation on the priesthood question.⁴²

Once everyone had voted, the tellers counted the votes to make sure that they corresponded with the numbers present in the assembly. Then they read in turn the votes. The name Brother Charles Henry recurred again and again so that it was impossible to restrain the applause as soon as a majority was reached. At the end, the final (unofficial) tally showed 78 votes for Brother Charles Henry, 34 for Brother Philip-Antoon, 2 for Brother Aubert-Joseph, and one each for Brothers Michel Sauvage, Maurice-Auguste, and Philibert, a Canadian Brother.⁴³ It was an astonishing mandate for the new Superior that resolved whatever doubts anyone might have had about the type of leadership that the Chapter wanted for the Institute.

Once the tally was complete, Brother Nicet-Joseph, accompanied by the ever-vigilant Archbishop, approached the candidate, announced the election and asked if he accepted the charge. Very simply, Brother Charles said in French, "*J'accepte.*"⁴⁴ Brother Nicet then handed over the book of the Rules and the seal of the Institute, and Brother Charles Henry Buttimer became the 23rd successor of Saint John Baptist de La Salle.

The ceremony concluded by escorting the new Superior to the special chair, said to have been used in the classroom by De La Salle himself, and traditionally brought out for election of a new Superior.⁴⁵ The Brothers then approached the new Superior to offer homage, congratulations, a handshake, an embrace, or whatever seemed appropriate. Many of the French Brothers were in tears, an expression, many thought, of great hope for the future and yet sadness that the direction of the Institute after almost three hundred years had passed from their hands.



39th General Chapter, First Session. Seated in the Founder's chair, Brother Charles Henry, newly-elected Superior, receives the homage of the delegates: Brothers Honoré (Reims), Anthony Joseph (LI-NE), Martial Robert (Belgium), and the three moderators, Brothers D. John (Baltimore), Nil Ambroise (Le Puy), and Pablo (Bilbao).

The first of those outside the Chapter to know of the election of Brother Charles Henry were some enterprising American and English Brothers resident in the Lasallianum, a wing in the motherhouse for Brothers studying in Rome. Realizing that the Founder's chair was being set in place for the newly-elected Superior, they set up a telescope on the opposite roof with an unobstructed view through an open window to the chapter hall. As soon as they saw Brother Charles being escorted to the chair, they flashed the word throughout the house, and by telephone to their home Districts, long before the bells rang out and the doors of the hall opened.⁴⁶ It was almost like watching for the white smoke to come from the Sistine chapel.

Once the doors were open, the delegates returned in procession to the chapel while chanting the *Benedictus*. There the new Superior was escorted to his place while the mighty organ accompanied the jubilant voices of all the residents of the motherhouse in a solemn *Te Deum*. At the delayed but hearty breakfast that followed, one of the young Mexican Brothers whom Brother Charles had often befriended was seen to be in tears, thinking that perhaps the Superior could no longer be his friend. A memorable picture caught the moment as Brother Charles assured him that there was nothing to fear on that score.⁴⁷ Another young Mexican was heard to remark that the Institute was entering into an era of *aggringamento* [sic]. After the festivities, a holiday was declared. It was a fitting reward for a good day's work.



39th General Chapter, First Session. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is held in the main chapel after the election. The newly-elected Superior is kneeling at the right and Archbishop Paul Philippe is at the left.

Election of the Vicar General

After the election of the Superior, the Chapter moved quickly to the election of his first counselor, who would carry the title of Vicar General. The two leading candidates being considered in the course of the informal exchanges during the days prior to the election were Brother Pablo Manuel and Brother Michel Sauvage. Although the Spanish delegates as they came to the Chapter probably had no thought of electing one of their own to such a post, they became increasingly interested in the possibility, heartened especially by the election of an American Superior General. Perhaps now it would be their turn.⁴⁸ The French delegates, in urging the cause of Brother Michel Sauvage, admitted frankly that they were more interested in having him as Vicar than as Superior. When asked whether they thought Brother Michel would be qualified to become Superior if the incumbent should die or resign, they replied that in such a case they thought Brother Michel himself would refuse the office of Superior. That statement was not likely to win American votes for Sauvage.⁴⁹ The "old guard" apparent-

ly continued to hope that Brother Philip Antoon, the incumbent Vicar General, might be reelected.

The election was set for the 5:00 p.m. assembly on May 25, perhaps to guarantee that there would not be another free day. It took two ballots to produce the needed majority. On the first ballot Brother Pablo had 53 votes (6 short of a majority), Brother Michel 31, Brother Philip 30, Brother Aubert 3, and Brother Sylvain, a Canadian, had 1 vote. On the second ballot, Brother Pablo was elected with 64 votes, Brother Michel stayed at 31, and Brother Philip's total fell to 22.⁵⁰

Final Decision on the Priesthood

On Friday, May 27, just ten days after it had been originally distributed, the report on the priesthood question was presented to the general assembly by the Finality Commission. It was evident from the start that the "rude interruption" imposed by the Vatican Congregation, and the election of a new Superior, had done nothing to change the views of the Commission or the prevalent opposition to the possibility of some Brothers being ordained. If anything, these events only served to stiffen the resistance.⁵¹ Following the formal presentation by the Commission in the morning assembly, the delegates then met during the afternoon in language groups, as required by the *Règlement* for all major questions, to discuss the report. On the following day, Saturday, May 28, and again on Monday, May 30, there was discussion in general assembly. Brother Manfredo, elected Roman delegate, argued for the priesthood in terms of deference to church authority (the decree of Vatican II) and a more prestigious position for the Brothers in church life. He also criticized the refusal of the Commission to take the recommendations of Cardinal Antoniutti as normative, or to invite experts from the Vatican to interpret the decree of the Council.⁵² The Procurator General countered with the official interpretation given by the postconciliar Commission, which had declared that the Vatican II document left the decision up to the free choice of the General Chapter.⁵³ There was no need for further "expert" interpretations.

Brother Antonio Nicasio, the Spanish advocate for the priesthood, in an impassioned and very poetic intervention, compared the priesthood to a beautiful garden behind an iron gate, the key to which the Church was now offering the Institute. How, he asked, could we ever refuse to enter and so deprive ourselves of all the benefits the garden had to offer?⁵⁴ In addition, it was argued that shortage of priests in

missionary lands was a need in the Church that the Institute was in a position to remedy.

The arguments against accepting the priesthood were many and forceful. The most intense of these came from an American delegate, fluent in French, who argued that the 325 Brothers who elected him would be proud to recognize in the commission report what they had always considered themselves to be: lay religious. The most technical intervention came from an American theologian who insisted that the shortage of priests would help make the efficacy of the sacramental encounter less *ex opere operato* and more *ex opere operantis*. The most sarcastic intervention came from the delegate who asked why the shortage of priests was an issue for Brothers from Italy and Spain, where there evidently was no shortage but a surplus. The most effective interventions were those of the many missionaries who argued that to ordain Brothers in places where priests were in short supply would in effect destroy our work in the schools. Bishops would be demanding the services of Brother-priests for the diocesan ministry. Part of our apostolic witness should be to share sacramental deprivation with the people where we work, and help our students learn to live as good Christians without dependable priestly ministry.⁵⁵

After the long more or less free-wheeling discussions on the previous Saturday and Monday, on Tuesday, May 31,⁵⁶ the Commission presented a series of eight propositions affirming the exclusively lay character of the Institute and removing all obstacles to Brothers who might want to leave the Institute to seek ordination. The next day, the final vote on the propositions, some of which had been amended during the course of the debate, came almost as an anticlimax. All of them passed by an overwhelming majority, more than 100 votes each out of a possible 117.⁵⁷ Some Brothers, familiar with the early history of the Institute, might have been tempted to reflect that the election of the new Superior and the debate on the priesthood took place between the feast of the Ascension and the octave of Pentecost, the same period employed by the Founder for the first general assembly of the Brothers 280 years earlier, in 1686.

But the decision on June 1, 1966, was not the end of the affair. During the course of the last meeting of the 1966 session of the Chapter, a series of documents with a cover letter by Brother Maurice-Auguste was distributed to the delegates.⁵⁸ The first, from the official Vatican Commission established to interpret the Decrees of Vatican II, contained a response to an inquiry by the superior generals of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the Marist Brothers, and the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Ireland concerning the disputed paragraph 10 of *Perfectae caritatis*. The reply of the Commission affirmed

that the intent of the passage was to open the possibility of ordination for some Brothers, not to endorse it positively, and that the General Chapter was completely free to accept or reject the option.⁵⁹ In effect, that gave official postfactum support to the action of the Chapter on the matter.

In another directive, however, the Congregation for Religious ordered that the complete text of the address to the Chapter by Cardinal Antoniutti be distributed, and also that to the text of Chapter Bulletin No. 5 be appended the notation that the visit of the Cardinal was not "of protocol" only but an "official" visit of the competent Cardinal Prefect; in addition, that text was not his personal opinion but reflected the teaching of Vatican II and the attitude of the Holy See on the problems that the Chapter should address and resolve.⁶⁰ In this way, with his address on the opening day of the Chapter and its publication on the closing day of the first session, the Cardinal had the first and the last but not the decisive word on the thorny question of the priesthood.

The Election of the Brother Assistants

One of the issues that had occupied many of the delegates prior to the Chapter was the role of the Brother Assistants. However, this was not a high priority among the delegates from the United States. They had been generally satisfied with their recent Assistants, who seemed in any case to have been on the fringes of the power structure at the center in Rome. As Assistants, Brother Charles Henry and his predecessors understood the American mentality; they interfered as little as possible in local matters, and even promoted as best they could the interests of the Districts under their charge. Yet, as the prechapter letters to the US delegates revealed, the situation was quite otherwise in most other sectors of the Institute. The Assistants had acquired a great measure of control over policies, appointments, and permissions in their respective territories. The resultant malaise explains why the Chapter from the beginning was so eager to endorse the principle of subsidiarity in government.

One model, much discussed during the debates on how to implement the principle of subsidiarity, would eliminate the territorial Assistants altogether in favor of a small advisory council for the Superior, composed of Brothers with expertise in specialized areas. Commission V, entrusted with all that related to government and dominated by English-speaking delegates, found this model too radical. The office of territorial Assistant, they felt, had become too well

established in the tradition of the Institute. The Commission believed that the office should be retained, but made more representative and its powers curtailed in the name of subsidiarity. Seeing some merit in the alternate model, the Commission proposed that four additional "resident" Assistants should be added to the General Council as counselors to the Superior. The force of this innovation was considerably mitigated by the proposal that three of the four resident assistancies be held by the Secretary General, Econome General, and Procurator General.⁶¹

The compromise seemed acceptable at the time and easily won the approval of the Chapter. Subsequent events proved that it could not work in practice. Ten years later it had to be radically revised.

The discussion on the number of Assistants, their status, and their function, together with their actual election, occupied most of the general assemblies for a full week from Friday, June 3, until June 10. The reapportionment of the territorial Assistants reduced the number of French Assistants to only one for France and one for the French missions. To be added was an Assistant for Asia, an area that had previously belonged to the English-Irish assistancy. The Commission had proposed only one Assistant for Latin America. When the two incumbent Latin American Assistants protested that the distances were too great for one person to manage, Brother Christovao from Sao Paulo countered that delegates from that area had voted 12 to 3 for only one Assistant. The Latin Americans were told to meet again with their Assistants. This time the vote was 9 to 7 in favor of two Assistants.⁶² When the matter was presented to the assembly, the vote turned out to be a tie. The Superior broke the tie by voting for two Assistants for Latin America.⁶³ On Monday, June 6, the Chapter finally voted to have 4 "residential" Assistants and 11 "regional" Assistants.

On Tuesday, June 7, Pope Paul VI received the capitulants in private audience in the consistorial hall in the Vatican palace.⁶⁴ That evening, instructions were given to caucus by regions in order to propose candidates for the office of regional Assistant to the vote of the assembly. The Superior was to propose the candidates for the resident assistancies after receiving suggestions from the delegates.

The actual elections took longer than expected. Elected on Wednesday, June 8, after being proposed by the Superior, were Brothers Aloysius Meldan as Secretary General, the first Australian to become an Assistant; Brother Maurice-Auguste, the incumbent Procurator General; Brother Arsène, a Canadian, as Econome General; Brother Michel Sauvage in the only really new position as Assistant for Formation. Also elected that day were seven of the territorial Assistants, among them Brother Michael Jacques, of Chinese ancestry, the

first Assistant for Asia; Brother Paulus Adams, who had to be summoned from Belgium; and Brother Richard Allen for England. Still to be elected were the uncontested candidates for the US (Brother Leo Kirby) and Italy (Brother Ruggero), as well as the unidentified candidates for the two posts assigned to the French. With time running out, these remaining elections were put off until Friday, the intervening Thursday being Corpus Christi, at the time a Holy Day of Obligation in Italy.⁶⁵

It was rumored the real reason for the delay was to give the French delegates time to resolve the conflicts swirling around their candidates. The French had already abandoned Brother Aubert-Joseph, the incumbent Assistant, as a candidate to be Superior or Vicar. Now, it seems, they wanted someone else as Assistant for France, but were willing to support Brother Aubert as a candidate for the French missions. Brother Aubert apparently found this difficult to accept. In fact, he suffered a breakdown soon thereafter and had to leave the Chapter.⁶⁶ When the conflict was over, the French proposed as Assistant for France Brother Patrice Marey, who had to be called to the Chapter from his post as Director of the renewal center at Athis-Mons. Brother Félicien, the Visitor of the French mission District of the Middle East, and who had served in the army and been a prisoner of war in World War II, was proposed as Assistant for all the French missions. Both were elected on June 10, as were Brother Leo Kirby for the United States and Brother Ruggero for Italy.⁶⁷

After the elections that set in place the central government of the Institute, Commission V presented its proposals for new structures to implement the principle of subsidiarity on the level of the Region, the District, and the local community. This involved new norms for the selection and appointment of the officers, the composition of the respective councils, and the function of the representative Chapters at each of the levels. During the week of June 13 these proposals were discussed and voted with a view to their eventual inclusion in the revised Book of Government. Subsidiarity was no longer a theory; structures had been established to try to make it a reality.

One of the more memorable interventions during the course of the debate on the Assistants was made by Brother Lawrence O'Toole, the lame-duck Assistant for England and Ireland. He complained that the Assistants were gradually being deprived of all their powers, a fate that he compared to the theme of the French-Canadian song, the *alouette* stripped of all its feathers one by one. In a humorous combination of resignation and realism, an association was thereupon formed called the A.A.A.A., the *Association Amicable des Anciens Assistants*. At the banquet celebrating the close of the first session of the

Chapter, as a tribute to the downgraded Assistants, Brother Maurice-Auguste led the assembly in a rousing rendition of *Alouette*.⁶⁸

Community Life

Although the most dramatic developments during the first session of the Chapter concerned the question of priesthood, the principle of subsidiarity with the consequent reorganization of the structure of government, and the election of the Superior and the members of the central government, the Chapter found time to deal with other matters of less fundamental import but of great interest. Two such issues, each with a long history, were the responsibility of the Commission on Community Life: the community vocal prayers and the use of tobacco.

Vocal Prayers

Older Brothers will recall that about the only changes that anyone noticed from previous Chapters were minor adaptations in the vocal prayers: replacing the traditional *Quicumque*, for example, with the litany of Saint Joseph, or lengthening or shortening the invocation to the Founder at the end of the religious exercises. It was inevitable that after Vatican II more substantive changes would be introduced to reflect a more liturgical, biblical, and ecclesial form of vocal prayer.

During the months before the Chapter, Brother Aubert-Joseph had been working to develop a modified form of the Liturgy of the Hours, known then as the Divine Office, for the use of the Brothers. Early in the Chapter, after winning the approval of the Commission, his proposal was presented to the general assembly on May 14. The capitulants agreed as an experiment during the Chapter to suppress the traditional Institute vocal prayers and to substitute a form of Lauds in the morning, Sext at noon, Vespers in the evening, and Compline before retiring, with provision for a period of meditation morning and evening.⁶⁹

On June 7, the Commission proposed that the experimental use of some form of the Office be extended to the entire Institute. The matter was discussed at length in subsequent meetings. The interventions ranged from enthusiasm on the one hand to excessive caution on the other, with a variety of adaptations in between.⁷⁰ Eventually, on June 14, the essence of the proposal was voted with a large majority.⁷¹ Although voted as an experiment, this style of vocal prayer set the pattern for the future and was eventually incorporated into the Rule.

The Use of Tobacco

This "burning" issue, as it was often called, with or without the intended pun, had been raised at General Chapters for years. Brothers in the United States and in the Low Countries especially had for a long time suffered from the legalisms surrounding the traditional prohibition which had become a sort of touchstone of Institute orthodoxy, observance, and eligibility for high office. Chapter after Chapter, delegates had been elected from those countries in the hope that they might have the rule changed or at least mitigated to allow for local determination. In the post-Vatican II climate, there was no way that the prohibition could survive. Nonetheless, the issue had to be thrashed out. And thrashed out it was, on the level of rhetoric at least.

The arguments against changing the regulation were predictable: tradition, custom, poverty, health, the Founder, asceticism, good example to the students. So were the arguments for change: peace of conscience, subsidiarity, historical and cultural diversity, personal responsibility, and elimination of hypocrisy. One Brother argued that smoking would effectively ruin the cause of Brothers proposed for beatification; another countered with the remark that Pope John XXIII was known to have smoked. The Latin American Visitor General cited two "experts" in opposition: a retired American Visitor General who considered smoking bad for American community life, and an American priest-psychologist who advocated more asceticism in religious life in the US. An elected American delegate countered with the observation that the retired Visitor General could hardly be an "expert," since he had not been a member of an active American community for 40 years; the priest-psychologist, known to the delegate, was himself a chain smoker.⁷²

Fortunately, the Commission had phrased its resolution very carefully. Instead of proposing that the rule against smoking be changed, it recommended that any reference to tobacco in the Rule be phrased positively in the broader context of the asceticism demanded by the religious life.⁷³ The proposal was voted on June 14 and was eventually incorporated into the official Acts of the Chapter in the section entitled "Orientations."⁷⁴ The matter is not even mentioned in the revised Rule and Constitutions.

Religious Names

The Commission on Community Life was also entrusted with the question of religious names. More than 300 notes had been received on the subject, most of them in favor of a return to the family name. This issue had already created considerable discussion in the 1956

Chapter,⁷⁵ but the compromise, abandoning the alphabetic lists in use up until then, only added to the confusion.

The Commission proposed that the official name of the Brothers would henceforth be the baptismal and the family name. Brothers would be left with the option of retaining their religious names for personal use and Districts might assign such names at investiture, but they would have no official status. There was some resistance from the traditional-minded, citing the example of the popes who choose a new name upon election. Others argued that the use of secular names would be one step more in the secularization of the Institute. An American delegate countered with the reminder that the so-called "secular" names are in reality "sacramental," deriving from the baptism of the Brothers and the matrimony of their parents.

In any case, the tradition of religious names, many of which were anachronistic, unpronounceable, or in other ways an embarrassment,⁷⁶ had little support. The proposal to abandon them officially was voted on June 14 and incorporated into the Acts of the Chapter under the heading of "Decrees."⁷⁷

Apostolic Works

Coeducation

This issue was another one that had run into roadblocks over the years. The official policy was overlaid with all sorts of suspicion of what might happen to the Brothers if they were to teach young girls as well as boys. Under the rubric of *mixité*, the Apostolic Finality Commission in the closing days of the first session of the Chapter presented an analysis of the problem and a proposal to put the decision on the regional and district levels.⁷⁸ The Bulletin remarks, "It did not provoke any violent debate perhaps because the capitulants were exhausted by work and the Roman heat, but more surely because conditions throughout the world are making it necessary for the Institute to do away with its absolute ban on co-education [*sic*]."⁷⁹

The Missions

Early in the session, several members of the Apostolic Finality Commission had obtained permission to organize an eighth commission on the Missions. Their report was also squeezed into the final days of the session. They succeeded in getting the Chapter to approve the establishment of a mission secretariat at the motherhouse to sustain the missions of the Institute, to provide personnel and financial aid, and

to be a channel for information about the missions. The newly elected Vicar General would be the titular head and official supervisor of the new secretariat.⁸⁰

Finances

From the early days of the session, up until the very end, the Commission on Finance was able to bring its reports to the assembly in piecemeal fashion. The details of the reports would be of little interest here. The events surrounding the presentation of the reports, however, were revelatory of hidden agenda with implications of more than passing significance.

The first report of the Commission dealt with the painful and embarrassing circumstances associated with the Istituto Filippin at Paderno in the District of Turin. When the founder of the Istituto, a Monsignor Filippin, became disenchanted with the Brothers and withdrew his financial support, the District was saddled with an enormous pile of accumulated debts. The case went through a series of trials in both the civil and ecclesiastical courts. Eventually the Institute was held responsible, and ways had to be found to assist the District pay the bills.⁸¹

The presentation on May 16 of the ten-year report on the Institute finances by the Econome General provoked some extensive criticism. No printed copies were distributed and the delegates were even told not to take notes. This led to demands that the reports henceforth be audited and submitted in writing, and that a new international and representative Economic Council be established. Questions were raised about the financial judgments involved in the Filippin affair; the construction of the school adjacent to the motherhouse; the purchase of the property at Parménie in southern France, where the Founder had been in retreat toward the end of his life; and subsidies for the movie "Monsieur De La Salle," starring Mel Ferrer.⁸²

In the assembly of June 3, another series of challenges came from the assembly floor. Brother Nicet-Joseph had to make an eloquent intervention defending the acquisition of the property at Parménie. When it was disclosed that Brother Damase-Jean, the French Assistant, had been able to use the major portion of the Institute-wide mission collection for his hard-pressed District of Madagascar, a delegate from Ireland made the telling point that most of the money had come from collections in English-speaking Districts. Questions were also raised about the equity in the apportionment of Institute taxes, especially in relation to Latin America.⁸³

The airing of these financial details proved a welcome and sometimes humorous relief from the more theoretical discussions that occupied most of the agenda. But, more important, the verbal exchanges established the principle that full disclosure and shared decision-making in financial matters were a necessary aspect of the Chapter's responsibility.

Planning for a Second Session

Even before the Chapter opened, many of the delegates had realized that it might not be possible to cover all the issues that needed attention in one session. The American group, for example, had made the possibility of a second session part of its agenda for the Chapter. As the session went along, it became clear to almost everyone that, in view of the importance of the issues, more time was needed to do them justice.

Principal among these issues was the revision of the Rule and Constitutions. The Rule Commission did not have sufficient input from the other Commissions and from the assembly votes to prepare a satisfactory text. The major questions concerning consecration and vows, formation, and community life had yet to come to the chapter floor. Although the Book of Government was fairly well advanced due to the pressure of the elections, many points were still to be resolved in the Commission.⁸⁴ Having exhausted most of the available time on the priesthood question, the Apostolic Finality Commission saw with greater clarity how necessary it would be to have a clear statement on the nature and the finality of the Institute that would set priorities in the area of its apostolic mission.

Additional motivation, if such were needed, was supplied in a second visit from Archbishop Paul Philippe at the 5:00 p.m. assembly on May 30. He came, this time at the invitation of the Chapter, to speak on the instructions that would shortly be forthcoming concerning the implementation of the conciliar Decree on the Religious Life. Principal among these was the requirement that within the next year or two every institute would have to call a special Chapter, to be known as a Renewal Chapter, to implement the adaptation and renewal called for by the Council. Informed that such was precisely what was being attempted at this Chapter, the Archbishop seemed open to the possibility that a second session might satisfy the conditions for a Renewal Chapter.⁸⁵

Concluding Formalities

The formal vote to have a second session was taken at the morning meeting on June 2. The details of organization were left to the Superior and his Council, with the recommendation that the session be held in October 1967.⁸⁶ Other suggestions were forthcoming from the assembly on June 11. On some subjects, it was thought that the entire Institute should be consulted. The view was expressed that the session should center only on the major themes.⁸⁷ In particular, the Rule Commission was prepared to circulate yet another draft of the Rule, this time to the entire Institute, for study and critique.⁸⁸ The Apostolic Finality Commission was also preparing a questionnaire on the nature and purpose of the Institute. Otherwise, with time running out, it was agreed in a general way that between the sessions the newly elected Assistants would coordinate the work of the Commissions on which they had served.

The final meeting on June 21 was occupied with a series of motions to express concern for the Brothers behind the Iron Curtain, to congratulate the Pope on the anniversary of his election, and to thank the members of the previous Regime for their work on behalf of the Institute. There were expressions of appreciation from Brother Denis, the former Vicar General, Brother Nicet-Joseph, the former Superior, and Brother Charles Henry, who characteristically thanked all and sundry from the *periti* and translators to the printers and the Sisters in the kitchen. With that, the Superior declared the first session of the 39th General Chapter closed. The delegates then assembled in the chapel where Cardinal Marella, a long-time friend of the Brothers in many parts of the world, presided over Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament with a solemn *Te Deum*.⁸⁹ There was certainly a lot to be thankful for.

Notes

1. Hereafter the entire text will be referred to by the title adopted for the English translation, that is, the Rule and Constitutions (despite the French use of the plural *Règles*). When the reference is to the individual rules and constitutions, lower case plurals will be used.

2. The sequence of events is described in two pages in the *Note au Sujet du Prologue de la Règle—Réponse à une question du F. Mialane* written in 1984 by Michel Sauvage. Copies were distributed by Brother Maurice-Auguste to members of the International Rules Commission in 1985, and in turn by Brother Luke Salm to participants in the SIEL in 1989 and 1990. The author has a copy.

3. The author notes in his diary, "4/21. Thurs. New (4th) edition of rules passed around. Looks very good as far as I read"; and "Sun. 4/24. Caucus meetings at 6 [P.M.] and again at recreation to firm up positions on . . . the New Rules (1st part OK except for length; needs revision on structure)." Ms. in ANYD.

4. Minutes of the meeting of May 14 at 9:00 a.m. Copies in ANYD. Prior to this date the minutes of the meetings had been read orally. The author notes in his diary for May 14: "Also voted duplicated minutes to replace reading despite negative votes of THF and most Assts." Even so, the so-called official "minutes" that were duplicated are not always useful without the accompanying documents to which they refer. Also, they are variously entitled *RAPPORT*, *COMPTE RENDU*, *PROCES VERBAL*, with or without the hyphen, and always in upper case. There is no consistency in style or content, due to the system of alternating secretaries at the Chapter. Henceforth the minutes for this session will be cited as "minutes . . . etc."

5. An English translation of the Prologue can be found in the GCNB of May 20, 1966. The excerpts quoted here are substantially those used in an article entitled "General Chapter Takes Giant Strides" in *Manhattan College Alumnae* (Winter 1967), p. 4.

6. *The Acts of the 39th General Chapter*, English version published by Saint Mary's Press, p. 10, nos. 33 and 34.

7. "Excerpts from a letter of Brother G. Edward, FSC, Rome, SN, 1966" distributed to US Delegates. Copy in ANYD.

8. "The Principle of Subsidiarity and Decentralization," published in off-set form in *Points of View* by Saint Mary's Press (no date). Typescript of the original in ANYD.

9. The 1947 Book of Government then in force stipulated: "The Capitulants shall be placed in the following order: The Brother Superior General and his Assistants shall occupy the first places; the retired members of the Regime, the second; the other Capitulants who are members by right, the third; and then the Deputies according to seniority of profession," VII, 38.

10. A copy in French of the outline distributed to the delegates is in ANYD. The presentation is also referred to in Circular 387, p. 12, and in the GCNB of May 18, 1966.

11. Oral communication of Brother Michel Sauvage to Brother Luke.

12. Minutes of the meeting of June 6 at 3:30 p.m. See also *The Acts*, p. 4, no. 6.

13. *Perfectae caritatis*, 10. English translation in Abbot, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 473.

14. Based on oral statements of Michel Sauvage to the Apostolic Finality Commission during the Chapter.

15. See "Excerpts from a letter of Brother G. Edward" cited above. Similar descriptions were given during the bus ride on the pilgrimage to Genazano to the author by Brother Mutien-Clement, who had been the Director of the Rome Second Novitiate. A rather nervous Belgian, he feared that the major issue facing the Chapter would be the question of the priesthood. He was very concerned about the position papers circulated during the Second Novitiate urging the priesthood for the Brothers. Despite attempts to suppress them, the papers had been widely read and discussed. They seemed to have generated more excitement than support, but here was an issue that had not featured prominently in the discussions of the American delegates prior to the Chapter.

16. Letter of Frère Romaric-Paul dated 28 January 1966 and circulated to US delegates.

17. Based on the recollection of the author. The official text will be cited below. This text does not contain the words exactly as quoted here, nor any of the Cardinal's other asides. In a similar address by the Cardinal to the Marist Brothers, asides of this kind were identified as such and inserted (by the Marists?) into the printed text. Copy in ANYD.

18. GCNB, May 3, 1966, p. 2.

19. Copy in ANYD.

20. Circular 386, *A First Report of the 39th General Chapter: The Lay Character of the Institute*, pp. 14 and 20.

21. Circular 387, *The 39th General Chapter: History of the First Session*, p. 24.

22. Based on the recollection of the author.

23. Circular 387, pp. 24–25.

24. GCNB, May 28, 1966.

25. Recollection of the author, who was present.

26. *Time*, May 27, 1966. Copy in ANYD.

27. Circular 387, p. 26. For some readers it might be necessary to note that according to the custom and the Rule at the time the Superior General was traditionally referred to as the Most Honored (M.H.) Brother, in French the *Très Honoré Frère* (T.H.F.).

28. Circular 387, p. 28. A somewhat more detailed account is in the author's diary for 5/18/66. Ms. in ANYD.

29. Minutes of May 18 at 11:00 a.m. The author notes in his diary for that date regarding report of Brother Maurice-Auguste on his visit to the Vatican Congregation, "Yesterday 5/17—Paul Philippe says [there are] new reports on the Chapter [that have] alarmed the Cardinal—suspend questions—Both agree to refer to Card.—phoned reply—Card. says no interview: Have elections!" Ms. in ANYD.

30. There is reason to suppose, also, that the Italian Brothers favoring the priesthood thought, wrongly, that their campaign would have more success with an American Superior.

31. Copy in ANYD.

32. Minutes of Thursday, May 19, 11:00 a.m. A detailed account of the whole affair is also in the authors's diary. Ms. in ANYD.

33. *Règlement du Chapitre Général*, chapter IV, nos. 3 and 4.

34. Copies in ANYD. The page describing the character and concerns of Brother Charles was published in Brother Leo Kirby's biography, *Brother Charles Henry Buttmer, FSC* (Romeville: Christian Brothers Publications, 1985), pp. 95–96.

35. Copy in ANYD.

36. The author notes in his diary, "Wed. 5/18. At 2:30 we meet . . . while the French were gathered by 3 Assistants, Aubert, Damase-Jean, and Charles-Edmond to hear a plea for the election of P. Antoon, Vicar, in the name of tradition and strength!" Ms. in ANYD.

37. The author notes in his diary under date of May 19: "Evening session with the French. They are concerned about BCH re tradition, Founder, the poor, non-clerical, schools, M. Sauvage's positions. Biggest challenge was "Blue Paper" on Assistants and his stated objection to expert counselors on the Regime." Ms. in ANYD.

38. Reported in GCNB of May 25, 1966. See also the minutes of the respective meetings. It should be noted that the minutes of the assemblies summarize the discussion and report the vote without giving the text of the proposals. For these, the minutes refer to the accompanying documents, which were filed and preserved separately from the minutes.

39. GCNB of May 25, 1966. The author notes in his diary, "5/20 Fri. Denis urged acceptance without discussion, citing painful discussion in 1923. Vote was 114-2. Nicet came in, Vicar spoke, asked him to continue to preside, he replied—much emotion—a very touching and painful business in all." Ms. in ANYD.

40. The author notes in his diary: "Wed. May 18 . . . The boom for M. Sauvage is dying. Didier [French expert] now speaks for BCH . . .".

"Fri. May 20 . . . p.m. meeting (Leo, E. Paul and I) with Spaniards (not quite all)—they affirm BCH. Latin Americans don't want to meet but V's of Cuba and Argentina tell us most are favorable [to BCH] (they fear Ant. Maria [LA Assistant]) . . . Amer's met after supper and agreed not to over-push BCH and to be cautious on Vicar. [For Vicar] French apparently want M. Sauvage and Spanish have returned to Pablo."

"Sat. May 21 . . . So. Amer's decide to meet with us after all. Most favorable to BCH . . . in 8:15 a.m. meeting"

"Sun. May 22 - 8:15 meeting again with Belgians. All seem convinced except Martial Robert, recently returned from his father's funeral, who speaks of *propaganda très fort*." Ms. in ANYD.

41. The text in the *Règlement* comes from the Book of Government: "I swear, and take Our Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Wisdom to witness, that I, Brother N... vote for the Brother whom I deem before God should be elected for the office of Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools." *Rule of Government of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, English edition, (Rome: 1947), VII, 53.

42. Based on the recollection of the author, who was present.

43. These are the figures recorded in the author's diary for Monday, May 23. Ms. in ANYD.

44. Brother Charles' conduct on this occasion contrasts with that of one of his more aggressive predecessors from some years back. According to the story circulating around the motherhouse, one newly elected and formidable French Superior, after the "*J'accepte*," is said to have proclaimed in a loud voice the words of the Founder, "I adore in all things the will of God in my regard," and then knelt to kiss the floor. But those nearby heard him say under his breath, "*Enfin!* (At last!)."

45. This was the last time that the chair was so used. Sometime after the Chapter, it was sealed under glass to preserve it. It is now displayed in the "relic room," as it is called, off the main lobby in the motherhouse.

46. See Brother Leo Kirby's biography of Brother Charles, (note 34 above), p. 100.

47. The picture was published, full page, in BFEC 186, July 1966, p. 139.

48. The author's diary simply states in the entry for May 23: "Late afternoon meeting with Spanish for Pablo as Vicar." Ms. in ANYD.

49. The author notes in his diary under date of May 24: "7:15 [p.m. ?] session with the French on M. Sauvage. D. Bernard says election of Vicar tomorrow is certain; Counselor Asst's is not. Honoré concerned about morale of the French. Ferdinand, S[sauvage]'s V[isitor], at Lille says if BCH were incapacitated S would not accede. Many won over, I think. Late session chez Cormac

Raymond with Amer's favored [sic] Pablo for Vicar but realized he hasn't too good a chance." Ms. in ANYD.

50. Minutes of May 25, 1966 at 5:00 p.m.

51. Nevertheless, the author notes in his diary for May 26: "Commission work in AM—including 'secret' meeting in [office of] Mutien Clement (Dtr-SN) to decide how to present priesthood. Much yelling back and forth in French. I argued for definite propositions for discussion and vote." Ms. in ANYD.

52. The author notes in his diary for May 28: "Battle royal on priesthood with A. Nicasio and Manfredo pushing every argument, esp. failure to take Antoniutti into account." Ms. in ANYD.

53. See note 58, below.

54. Much of this account is based on the recollection of the author. The minutes remark simply that the meeting (of May 30 at 11:00 a.m.) opened with "*une intervention assez poétique*" on the words *Nihil obstat* in the Vatican decree.

55. More than 35 interventions on the subject are summarized in the minutes of the meetings of May 28 at 11:00 a.m., 5:00 p.m., and May 30 at 11:00 a.m. The speakers are not identified. From the knowledge or the memory of the author it might be interesting to note the subsequent fate of those mentioned in the narrative. Brother Nicasio was so emotionally upset by the final decision that he had to leave the Chapter (noted in the minutes of June 6). He later left the Institute and was ordained. At last report he was still active in the ministry. The French-speaking American delegate who spoke with such intensity against the priesthood was Brother Paul Carey. He later became Visitor of his District, then left the Institute, was ordained, and is still active in the ministry. Brother Manfredo later left the Institute and has since married. The American theologian referred to is the author. His prepared intervention, along with those of several of the *periti* at the Chapter including Brothers Saturnino, a Spanish theologian, Michel Sauvage, a French theologian, Vincent Ayel, a French catechist, and Paul Grieger, a French psychologist, were published in Circular 386.

56. The author notes in his diary: "Wrapped up priesthood in AM with D. John using summary procedure to get through the 8 proposals despite some objections, esp. way of handling amendments." Ms. in ANYD.

57. The votes received by each of the eight propositions are recorded in Circular 386, pp. 69–70. The proposition that caused the most discussion during the debate, and was very much toned down in the amendment process, was Proposition 5, recommending that permission be sought for Brothers to be allowed under certain circumstances to distribute Holy Communion either during or outside of the celebration of Mass.

58. Chapter Document 10-A, *Documentation communiquée par la Procure Générale près le St-Siège*, June 19, 1966. Copy in ANYD.

59. The response to the *Dubium* submitted by the superior generals notes that Pope Paul VI approved the response on June 10, 1966. It is signed by H.J. Cardinal Cicognani.

60. Chapter Document 10-A, p. 7, quotes the text of a letter to the Procurator General dated June 17, 1966. Although the Cardinal's text was distributed to all the delegates by order of the Congregation for Religious, the copy in the motherhouse archives bears the inscription: *CONFIDENTIEL Ce text ne pourrait être publié qu'avec l'assentiment du Frère Supérieur Général*. Copy in ANYD.

61. In order that the election of the Superior might proceed with a clear idea of what the central administration would look like, these proposals had been presented to the assembly and defended by Brother Gabriel Costello as spokesman for the Government Commission on May 21. This choice represented a defeat for Brother Noel-Adrien, the representative from Central France and a member of the Government Commission. He had met with the US delegates on May 18 to try to get support for his plan. The author notes in his diary, "I like his [Adrien's] idea (4 areas: Admin., Rel. Life, Ed. Apostolate, [Formation?]) better than Gabe's (Sec. Gen., Ec. Gen., Proc. Gen., Missions)." Ms. in ANYD.

62. The facts are noted in the author's diary. Ms. in ANYD. It illustrates the manner in which the Latin American Assistants were able to control their delegates, who voted for progress when they met by themselves, but fell into the conservative line when they met with their Assistants.

63. Minutes of the meeting of Monday, June 6 at 3:30 p.m. Note that during the last weeks of the first session the mid-afternoon meeting had to be restored to complete the business of the Chapter.

64. The text of the Superior's address on that occasion, together with the Pope's reply, can be found in Circular 387, pp. 37 ff.

65. The US delegates took advantage of the holiday and the fine weather to test the waters of the Mediterranean at the beach near Ostia where the Brothers had a small cabana. In a rare gesture of national solidarity, the Superior General shared the day with his compatriots.

66. Brother Aubert-Joseph is listed as "absent" in all the minutes from June 8 to the end of the session.

67. Short biographies of the new Assistants were published in GCNB, June 11, 1966. All the Americans resident in the motherhouse celebrated the election of their new Assistant by taking him to dinner at the famous Scoglio di Frisio restaurant. A memorable moment in the celebration came when Brother Cornelius Luke in full habit rose to propose a toast to the new Assistant, who had been one of his protegés.

68. Based on the recollection of the author, who was present.

69. GCNB, May 18, 1966; minutes of meeting of May 14 at 9:00 a.m.

70. Minutes of the meeting of June 7 at 9:00 a.m., and June 10 at 9:00 a.m. The minutes cite the intervention of one delegate, who commended Brother Aubert-Joseph and expressed the thanks of the assembly for the care and preparation he had devoted to the question of the vocal prayers.

71. Minutes of the meeting of June 14 at 9:00 a.m. The specific proposals were published in Circular 387, pp. 54-55.

72. The interventions, especially those in favor of the status quo, are recorded in unusual detail and with important points underlined in the minutes of the meetings of June 13 at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. The Latin American Visitor General, who was fluent in the three languages, spoke in English when his message was aimed at the Americans. He also happened to be one of the secretaries who may well have prepared the minutes. The American elected delegate referred to is the author, who has supplied some details lacking in the minutes.

73. Under the heading *A Burning Question*, the proposal is well described in GCNB, June 15, 1966.

74. *The Acts of the 39th General Chapter*, nos. 139, 140. See also Circular 387, pp. 56-57.

75. Circular 354, pp. 93-94.

76. A notable example is Brother Scubilion, recently beatified. The author has an extensive description of the traditional usage in a chapter entitled "What's in a Name?" in his biography of Brother Scubilion: Luke Salm, FSC, *Brother Scubilion Rousseau, FSC: Apostle of Freedom and Reconciliation* (Romeoville: Christian Brothers Publications, 1986), pp. 11–20. Then there is the story of the French Director who had given his novices permission to write home on the day of investiture. One of them, in tears, was not writing anything. When asked the reason, he sobbed, "How can I write home to tell them that you have given me the name of our family cow?"

77. *The Acts*, nos. 24–27. See also Circular 387, p. 56.

78. The text of the propositions on co-education is in Circular 387, pp. 53–54.

79. GCNB, June 21, 1966, the final issue. One of the provisions was that the Visitor might allow certain Brothers to teach mixed classes at the University level. This is interesting in view of the fact that years before Brother Charles Henry himself had been refused permission to teach at Catholic University in Washington, despite many and ardent pleas from the professors in the Classics department for his services.

80. GCNB, *Ibid.* See also Circular 387, pp. 81–82.

81. A full account of the matter is given in a document supplied by the District of Turin entitled *District Council The "Filippin" Business*. English language copy in ANYD.

82. Minutes of the meeting of May 16 at 9:00 a.m. Copy in ANYD.

83. Minutes of the meeting of June 3 at 9:00 a.m. Copy in ANYD. The specific decrees and resolutions were published in Circular 387, pp. 80–81.

84. The propositions from Commission V that were voted in the first session were published in Circular 387, pp. 57–80. In addition to the principle of subsidiarity, they refer to the General Chapter, the Superior and Vicar, the Assistants and Visitors, and the various councils and Chapters.

85. A rather full report of the meeting is given in GCNB of June 1.

86. *Ibid.* See also Circular 387, p. 46.

87. Minutes of the meeting of June 11 at 9:00 a.m.

88. Known as P. 5, the English version was circulated under the title, *Rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools: Draft for study (5)*. The document contains an introduction by the Superior General dated Rome, July 1, 1966.

89. Circular 387, pp. 49–51.

4

The 39th General Chapter Intersession (1966-1967)

Once the first session of the Chapter officially closed on June 21, 1966, it did not take the delegates very long to escape from the heat of Rome. As they arrived back in their respective Districts, by direct or more often by indirect routes, they brought to their constituents the good news, or the bad, about what the Chapter had accomplished and what yet remained to be done. The newly-elected Superior and his Assistants, after a brief respite, were charged with coordinating from Rome the activities of the intersession period to assure maximum preparation for the second session, scheduled to open in October of the following year.

It would be impossible within the limits of the present narrative to describe all the activities related to the Chapter that took place throughout the Institute during the year and a half between sessions. In view of the intended audience, and the limited availability of written and oral source material, what follows will be confined for the most part, as was the account of the preparation for the Chapter, to the activities of the Brothers in the United States.

Adjustment to Transition in the United States

One of the first effects of the decisions taken by the Chapter on the delegates themselves was the choice of a new name and sometimes even a new identity. Most of the delegates opted to couple the more familiar of the two religious names with the family name. Thus the roster now included Brothers Leo Kirby, Gabriel Costello, and Luke Salm from New York, Joseph Finnegan from LI-NE, Thomas Matthews from Saint Louis, Basil Rothweiler from Winona, MN, Raphael Bodin from Santa Fe, and Jerome West from California. Only the two Baltimoreans opted for radical change as Brother Didymus John became Brother William Quinn and Brother Elrick Paul became Brother James Carey. It is as such that they will be referred to henceforth. Similar adjustments were made throughout the world. The newly-elected Vicar would no longer be Brother Pablo Manuel but Brother José Pablo.

However, the Superior never referred to himself, and was rarely referred to by anyone else, in any way other than Brother Charles Henry. Only after his death with the establishment of the Buttimer Institute of Lasallian Studies in his honor did his family name become as familiar to the Brothers as Charles Henry had been.

Two new Brothers were added to the roster of US delegates. Brother Augustine Loes, appointed to succeed Brother Leo Kirby as Visitor of New York, became an *ex officio* delegate. Brother Joel Damian, after some delay, was named as alternate to succeed Brother I. Philip, who had left the first session early in June and decided not to return. During the intersession period Brother James Carey replaced Brother William Quinn as Visitor of Baltimore, but this change did not affect their status as delegates. A new Central States District, made up of communities in the Chicago area, had meanwhile been formed, but the delegate status of its Visitor, Brother Maurice Anglim, remained moot pending a decision of the Chapter.

Since most of the delegates were Visitors, their first concern was to provide norms and guidelines for their Brothers during the transition between Chapter sessions. This was not an easy task. In the climate of self-determination and fulfillment, freedom and personal autonomy, that prevailed in the mid-1960s, some Brothers felt that each one was now free "to do his own thing." They took the decision on subsidiarity to mean that rules and structures had been eliminated altogether. An opposite view, held by those resistant to change, maintained that all the prescriptions of the 1947 Rule ought to be observed until formally abrogated. The Visitors, caught somewhere in the middle and relatively free now from direct control by the center, felt that it was their responsibility to issue specific directives as official interpretations of the mind of the Chapter.

This situation was complicated by the fact that some issues touching personal and community life had already been decided by the Chapter and some had not. Religious names had been officially abandoned, the Office of the Church was to replace the traditional vocal prayers as an experiment, and teaching in schools other than those conducted by the Brothers was to be allowed. But any decision on the religious habit had been deferred; nothing had been decided on the amount of time required for community prayer; no regional or district Chapters were yet functional to decide on matters such as the use of money, alcohol, and tobacco. Although the Rule of 1947 was still technically in force, the fact that a revised version (P. 5) was circulating for discussion left any recourse to the authority of the Rule problematic if not impossible.

October 1966: US Regional Conference of Visitors

In the early fall of 1966, the Regional Conference of Visitors and Auxiliaries met at the retreat center in Saint Helena, California, to try to provide some measure of uniformity.¹ Compared to the requirements of the traditional Rule, their directives seem liberal and liberating, but compared to what was already happening and what would eventually become common practice among the Brothers, they strike a contemporary reader as unnecessarily detailed and restrictive. This substitution of a new set of “rules” for the old “Rule” may have reflected a mentality that looked upon renewal as dependent on a tightly controlled adaptation of structures and regulations at the national or district level.

The agenda of the late September meeting of the Regional Conference also included some preparation for the second session of the Chapter. Meetings of the Regional Conference with the delegates and alternates were set for February, April, and July. Three position papers were assigned: 1, implementation of subsidiarity, with special attention to the legislative powers of regional and district Chapters (Costello, Finnegan, Anglim); 2, principles of renewal in view of prayer, vows, and community (Quinn, Anglim); 3, finality of the Institute and the apostolate (Loes). Brother James Carey was also charged to prepare a summary of the work of the chapter commissions for eventual distribution to the Brothers. Brother Joel Damian would act as Executive Secretary for the delegation.

January 1967: Circular of the Superior

On January 26, 1967, Brother Charles Henry issued the traditional Circular extending New Year's greeting to the Brothers.² He used the occasion to comment on reactions to what the Chapter had thus far accomplished and what yet remained to be done. The letter illustrates the well known ability of Brother Charles to strike a balance between extremes, in this case between the “greater number” of letters from Brothers for whom “the Chapter is a motive for encouragement and enthusiasm,” and those from “Brothers who view with some distress and distrust the direction taken by the Chapter.” He says he does not think these fears are warranted, but admits that some mistakes will be made. He asks that the Brothers have the courage to act resolutely for renewal, but suggests that courage be tempered with prudent judgment.

The longest section of the 11-page letter treats of the problems and possibilities connected with dialogue, a word that had assumed new prominence in Institute language.³ Brother Charles Henry concludes by listing the items that have yet to be accomplished by the Chapter. In addition to a definitive text of the Rules and Constitutions, he envisions doctrinal statements on the Finality of the Institute, the Spirituality of the Teaching Brother, and Poverty. Finally, he asks that the Chapter address itself to the renewal of religious life called for by the Council.

February 1967: Meeting of the US Delegates at Lockport

On February 10, 1967, the US delegates assembled at Lockport, Illinois for their first meeting as a delegation since the close of the first session. Although only a year and a month had passed since they had first met together at Plano, a totally new situation now confronted the delegates. Most of the Plano agenda had been already accepted, notably an open Chapter with elected officers and rules of procedure, the election of an American General, and the endorsement of the principle of subsidiarity in government. Many problems were yet to be resolved: the finality of the Institute, the text of the Rule and the Book of Government, and strategies to bring about the renewal of the Institute. But a unified course of action was not so easy to achieve as in the early stages of the movement for reform.

The American delegates had come to the first session of the Chapter far better prepared than any other group. But even before the session ended, it was evident that other national groups were rapidly catching up. This process had only accelerated in the months since the session had ended, especially with the French group under the leadership of Brother Michel Sauvage and the new French Assistant, Brother Patrice Marey. There is more than a hint of this development in a letter from Rome addressed to the American delegates at Lockport by Brother Leo Kirby.

Success to you in your important work of preparing for the Second Session of the 39th General Chapter. There are those who say that the Americans have shot their bolt (and what a bolt it was!), and that they will fizzle out in the Second Session. There is no doubt that they [other delegations?] are preparing as never before. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that we will be just as effective in the Second Session as we were in the First, but in

a different sort of a way. In the First, we led the Chapter by our courageous, optimistic spirit and by our conviction that adaptation was necessary. . . . In the Second we will lead the Chapter by our faith and our attachment to the great principles of the Institute and by our conviction that renewal of spirit is the end and be-all of adaptation.⁴

In a subsequent letter to Brother Joel Damian explaining why he would be unable to attend the Lockport meeting, Brother Leo revised his analysis a bit, but stressed again his concern about American leadership at the Chapter.

It is oversimplistic to say as I have implied that adaptation belongs to the first session and renewal to the second. It is not so clear-cut as that at all. . . . At any rate in emphasizing renewal I do not want to give the impression that we American Brothers should hand over the reins of leadership to another group. Personally I believe that the future of the Institute hinges on the American delegation precisely because it is the most educated, the most sophisticated and the most well-informed group of Brothers at the Chapter.⁵

Organization

Despite all these changes in personnel and perspective, the meeting at Lockport produced a remarkable unanimity in the proposals voted. In particular there was support for the principle that Districts created since the opening of the Chapter, for example, Chicago, should be represented by a voting delegate; that all newly appointed Visitors and all the Auxiliary Visitors of sub-regions, for example, in mission areas, be invited to the second session as non-voting observers.⁶ A proposal to invite delegates from South America to the July meeting of the US delegates was tabled.⁷ Since the delegation as such had no financial resources, a motion to fund a questionnaire to measure the reaction to experiments with various forms of religious dress being conducted in some Districts was defeated but was later accepted by the Visitors Conference.⁸ In connection with the return to secular dress, the group discussed of a proposal from an alternate delegate that thought be given to becoming a secular institute. No action was taken on the proposal, yet it was clear from both the discussion and the write-up in the minutes that there was not a clear understanding of the canonical difference between a secular and a religious institute.⁹

Government

During the discussion of the report of the ad hoc Committee on Government, a proposal had been made to prepare a paper supporting the position that the regional and district Chapters have a legislative character. The Committee, however, following the advice of the Procurator General, took the position that the powers of the regional and district Chapters come from authority delegated through the Superior General or the Visitor respectively, with no juridical binding force but considerable moral authority. After discussion and clarification, a resolution was passed unanimously accepting the report.¹⁰

Finality

Brother Augustine Loes reported that he had appointed a Brother full time to investigate the issues and to prepare a report on the finality of the Institute and the apostolate. He noted that the report would stress training students in their social responsibility, training some Brothers as specialists in education and sociology, and experimenting in the apostolate, especially in programs for the urban poor.

Brother Luke Salm alerted the delegates to the fact that the French delegates were already far advanced in their preparation on the finality question. At this stage they were trying to find a way to integrate the apostolic finality of the Institute with religious consecration and community life. Brother Luke reminded the delegates that the second commission had already recommended that the question of the finality of the Institute be a kind of *épine dorsale* (backbone), a consistent theme running through and holding together all the discussions of the second session. The American group resisted this suggestion if it were to mean that finality be the sole topic at the second session, and passed unanimously a resolution expressive of their concern in the matter. Brother Luke was commissioned to seek further information from the American Assistant in Rome.¹¹

The Rule

In a discussion on the fifth draft of the Rule, it became apparent that the Brothers were considerably dissatisfied with both the Draft and the method of consultation. Too many specific suggestions were coming from all sides, including the chapter commissions. After discussion, the delegates decided to prepare a series of propositions relating to the work of the chapter commissions for the Brothers discussion and vote. For this purpose, a set of 21 propositions was prepared to be sent to the Visitors for distribution to the Brothers with directions as to how to reply.¹²

April 1967: Meeting of US Delegates at Dunrovin

By the time spring was in the April air, so also were the American delegates as they flew from various parts of the country to Saint Paul, Minnesota, and were transported thence to the Dunrovin Retreat House at Stillwater. This time Brother Leo Kirby, the Assistant, was able to be present. Although he noted that he would prefer to have his presence and remarks be simply those of an American delegate,¹³ it soon became evident that his principal role would be to serve as a channel of communication in both directions between the American delegates and the center at Rome.

Report of Brother Assistant

Brother Leo's report was the first item on the agenda. He noted that the preparations for the second session were entrusted for the most part to the commissions, each with a Brother Assistant appointed as liaison with the center and from there to the rest of the delegates. He then reported that he had attended a meeting of the French Brothers held at Perpignan near the Spanish border. A translation of the preliminary paper on finality that came out of that meeting was distributed and briefly discussed. Once again, the Americans expressed concern that finality should not be the only topic, or even the first and principal topic, of the second session.¹⁴

Organization

The delegates then turned their attention to procedural matters. They gave priority to the request to have the Visitor of the newly-formed Central States District seated at the Chapter as an elected voting delegate. Since no response had as yet been made to an earlier request, a strongly worded resolution with detailed argumentation was approved to be forwarded to Brother Pablo, the Vicar and Chairman of the Membership Committee of the Chapter.¹⁵ Also discussed were some minor changes in the Rules of Procedure, the need for personnel to help with the news releases, and the possible replacement of *periti*.¹⁶

Position Papers

Since position papers had been so effective in the first session, and since they seemed to be a good vehicle to exercise leadership and to demonstrate the competence of the American Brothers in various areas, the US delegates continued to attach great importance to this strategy. Not only were new papers commissioned, but plans were made to have them all translated into French and Spanish. Brother

Leo Kirby in particular seemed to favor the multiplication of papers, perhaps as a matter of pride in his constituents and the resources at his disposal. It was he who first suggested that the papers be translated¹⁷; he urged the American Brothers studying in Europe to prepare papers on chapter topics¹⁸; and eventually he arranged to have all the American position papers collected and published.¹⁹

If the truth were told, however, it was probably not the position papers themselves (they often were not even read), but rather the force of the ideas contained in them that contributed to the education of the delegates and the dynamism of the Chapter. As time went on, it became more and more apparent that the American reliance on position papers was a tired strategy. There was also the question of whose position a particular paper represented.²⁰ The experienced delegates knew that there could be no substitute for mastering the techniques of work in commission: solid preparation, personal conviction and forceful advocacy, the ability to dialogue across languages and cultures, and willingness to surrender local and national agenda for the good of the Institute at large.

At Dunrovin, however, the delegates were not quite prepared to question the value of position papers. Some topics had already been assigned the previous September. Accordingly, Brother Augustine Loes reported on the progress of the paper assigned to him. The Brother he had assigned to do the preliminary research was busy with reading and interviews.²¹ The intention was to develop further the paper on finality prepared earlier by the faculty of the scholasticate at De La Sallé College in Washington.²²

Brother Luke Salm was more concerned with the work in progress undertaken by the European members of the Apostolic Finality Commission of the Chapter. In view of the reluctance of the US delegates to give priority to the topic of finality, as well as the uncertainty and suspicion about what the French delegates would propose, Brother Leo was asked to invite Brother Michel Sauvage to the meeting scheduled for July in Memphis.²³ Brother Luke was asked, meanwhile, to research the specific question of the nature of religious life as differentiated from that of apostolic lay persons in the world, a matter that had been raised in the paper by the Washington group. Brother Luke was also asked to take steps to call a meeting of the North American members of the Chapter's Commission on Apostolic Finality. The residue of suspicion is apparent in the vote; the motion passed with 14 in favor and 7 against.²⁴

Additional position papers were assigned as the discussions progressed. Brother Gregory Robertson agreed to prepare a paper pinning down the specific powers that would belong to regional and

district Chapters in the light of subsidiarity. Brother A. Philip Nelan was asked to prepare a paper developing the points that had emerged from the discussions in the Mission Commission of the Chapter.²⁵ Brother William Quinn, concerned that the statements of principle that would appear in the revised Rule might lack psychological impact for the Brothers, volunteered to prepare a sort of declaration to be addressed to the Brothers on the nature of the religious state.²⁶ Finally, Brother Leo Kirby, in his capacity as American Assistant, was asked, in a series of seven propositions, to convey the specific concerns of the delegates back to Rome.²⁷

National Renewal Programs in the United States

During the intersession period, the General Chapter was not the only or, perhaps, not even the dominant concern of the Brothers generally throughout the United States. Other programs or movements of national scope sometimes ran parallel to and sometimes were interwoven with issues relevant to the Chapter. Often they tended to compete with the Chapter for the attention of the Brothers and the superiors. Among the most prominent were programs for spiritual renewal, programs for theological study, organization of the American-sponsored missionary efforts, and the socio-psychological survey known as the Ammentorp Study. The first two of these had their origins in the 1950s, the others came to the fore during the intersession period.

Spiritual Renewal

During the mid-1950s the Conference of Visitors established what was described as an American Second Novitiate. It was designed to replace the more traditional long retreats of 50 days for Brothers in mid-career and to transplant onto American soil the rigorous experience and isolation of the Rome Second Novitiate. The site selected was in the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountains outside Santa Fe. Direction of the center was entrusted to Brother Cornelius Luke, long-time Visitor General and champion of religious discipline and other-worldly asceticism. In 1964, he was replaced by Brother John Halpin, who had just completed two terms as Visitor of New York, and whose approach to religious life was similar to but somewhat more humane than that of his predecessor. Both Directors had Brother Charles Reutemann to assist them. During the intersession period, Brother Charles was slated to become Director of the program and for that reason Brother Leo Kirby invited him to attend the Memphis meeting of the Visitors and delegates scheduled for July 1967.

Theology

A somewhat different movement had its origin in an effort to raise the standards of the religion program in the Brothers' colleges. For this purpose, it was necessary to have Brothers trained in theology. At first some Brothers were sent to Notre Dame University to take the summer program leading to the MA degree in theology. Then some Brothers were sent to Catholic University in Washington to follow the full seminary program leading to the theological doctorate. In May 1955, Brother Luke Salm became the first noncleric to be awarded the STD degree from Catholic University,²⁸ to be followed in the years immediately after by Brothers James Kaiser and Stephen Sullivan. At about the same time, Brother Gabriel Murphy was sent from California to get his theology doctorate at the Angelicum in Rome.

All of the early Brother theologians had been trained in the pre-Vatican II period and, although the scripture courses reflected contemporary scholarship, the theology derived for the most part from the scholastic manuals traditional in the Roman and American seminaries. In the early sixties, a reorganization of the Religious Education department at Catholic University made available for the first time in the United States a doctoral program reflecting contemporary developments in European theology. An early and possibly the most brilliant and productive graduate of this program was Brother Gabriel Moran. By the time the General Chapter was convened, Brother Gabriel was at Manhattan College in New York, where he directed a masters' program in what was called catechetical theology. In this capacity, he was invited to attend the Dunrovin meeting of the Visitors and delegates to solicit national participation in the Manhattan program.

Brother Gabriel had been the pride and joy of Brother Charles Henry as Visitor of the LI-NE District, who saw in him a youthful challenge to the New York theologians with their more traditional theological training.²⁹ Brother Leo Kirby, as Director of the Washington scholasticate while Brother Gabriel was doing his doctoral studies, had also become enthusiastic about this progressive young theologian.³⁰ It is not surprising that Brother Gabriel Moran was invited to present one of the preliminary lectures at the opening of the second session of the Chapter.

After the Vatican Council, the focus on advanced degrees in the sacred sciences for the American Brothers shifted from Catholic University in Washington to the European universities. By the time the Chapter was underway in the mid-sixties, the American Districts had Brothers doing doctoral study in theology, scripture, liturgy, and philosophy in centers such as Rome, Paris, Tübingen, Louvain, and

Oxford, in addition to those at Washington and Notre Dame. Brother Leo Kirby, sensing his responsibility for these American scholars in diaspora, was determined to involve them in preparations for the second session of the Chapter.³¹ This resource, noted as a possibility during the Dunrovin meeting, became a source of contention in subsequent meetings of the delegates at Memphis and beyond.

The Missions

When the Commission on the Missions had been formed during the course of the first session of the Chapter, no Brothers from the United States were in a position to participate, although American Brothers were heavily involved in mission areas and were seeking for a more effective voice in the Chapter. At that time, the American missionary efforts were largely entrusted to the various Districts. This was another area in which Brother Leo Kirby felt that, in his role as Assistant, he should exercise some initiative. Accordingly, in late 1966 he asked Brother Philip Nelan, who had recently finished a term as Auxiliary Visitor for the Philippines, to conduct a survey with a view to establishing a Mission Secretariat to coordinate all the missionary activity of the American Brothers. The preliminary report was ready for the Lockport meeting in February 1967.³² Despite initial indifference on the part of the Visitors to the project,³³ the secretariat was established and incorporated in the District of Columbia as the Foreign Services Council [sic: FSC] on May 24, 1967. The first Directors were the eight US Visitors and Brother Philip.³⁴

Brother Philip meanwhile had been invited by Brother Leo to the Dunrovin meeting, where he was assigned to develop a position paper for the Chapter on the problems of the Brothers on the missions. In his capacity as Director of the Foreign Services Council, Brother Philip would come to the second session of the Chapter as an observer.

The Ammentorp Study

On the evening of Friday, April 14, 1967, the Visitors and delegates at Dunrovin were invited to attend a presentation by Dr. William Ammentorp, a sociologist from the University of Minnesota. In conjunction with some Brothers from the Winona, MN District, headed by Brother Leonard Courtney, he proposed that the region sponsor a sociological and psychological study to develop a profile of the Christian Brothers in the United States and Toronto. The study would use the methods of empirical sociology, especially the sociology of religion, and also apply the developmental theories of Erik Erikson to the

stages in the religious life of the Brothers. Many of the delegates, including Brother Assistant, expressed strong reservations about the project. The research team would be composed of “outsiders”; all were seculars and, although a good friend of the Brothers, Doctor Ammentorp was not a Catholic. Some of the Brothers wondered how it would be possible for the researchers to do justice to the faith dimension, that is, the theological and ecclesial aspects of the Brothers’ vocation that transcend the limits of empirical research.³⁵ In addition, it was observed that such a study would distract from the role of the General Chapter, still in process, as the focus of renewal for the Institute.

Many, however, were much taken by the idea. In some centers of formation in the United States, psychology and sociology were already challenging theology as the dominant influence on the formation of the Brothers. The proposal, it was argued, would thus provide a fresh insight into hitherto neglected aspects of the Brothers’ vocation. Eventually, it was agreed to go ahead with the study. Within three weeks of the meeting, Brother Leo Kirby addressed a letter to the Visitors and capitulants indicating that he had changed his mind, that he had resolved for himself all the objections that had been raised to the proposal.³⁶ When the planning committee for the study met early in June, representatives from all the Districts in the region except Saint Louis and Toronto were present.³⁷ Thereafter the study took on a life of its own and had very little if any impact on the General Chapter. It was eventually published with the title *The Committed*.³⁸

Contacts with Canadian Delegates

Shortly after the Dunrovin meeting, Brother Joseph Finnegan hosted an informal meeting with the Canadian Visitors at the LI-NE Provincialate in Narragansett. Brother Joseph was able to report that the Canadians were in substantial agreement with the US delegation on most issues. They did, however, raise some questions concerning prayer life that they thought the Chapter’s Commission on Community Life would have to resolve: the rosary as a private obligation; minimum time limits for religious exercises; the form of the Office for use in the Institute; clarity about the Office as a replacement for the traditional exercises.³⁹

June 1967: Circular of the Superior General

On June 6 the Superior General issued the Circular formally convoking the second session of the 39th General Chapter.⁴⁰ The opening date was set for September 30. Certain officers were asked to come to

Rome two weeks in advance to prepare for a prompt beginning of commission work. Concerned about the volume of responses to the projected revision of the Rule, the Regime had appointed an international committee of editors to come to Rome in mid-August to begin to sort out the replies.⁴¹ It was envisioned that these editors would work during the session with and through the Rule Commission, and even continue to work at Rome after the Chapter "until the final version [of the Rule] is ready for distribution."⁴² The Circular also listed the names of the speakers who would make presentations on selected themes from the Vatican Council. These were scheduled to occupy the first week of the session.

More than half of the 20-page Circular was taken up with suggested modifications in the Rules of Procedure, most of them minor adjustments based on the experience of the first session. Finally, there was a report of the vote taken by mail whereby the capitulants by a large majority agreed to the proposal that all newly appointed Visitors and incumbent Auxiliary Visitors of isolated mission areas be invited to the second session as observers, without the right of vote. This measure added to the American delegation at the second session Brother Maurice Anglim, newly appointed Visitor of Central States, as well as Brothers Justin Lucian and Peter Dougherty, Auxiliary Visitors respectively for the Philippines and East Africa. As already noted, Brother Philip Nelan, Director of the Foreign Services Council, would also attend.

June 1967: Publication of *Intersession*

While the American delegates were attending their meeting at Dunrovin, the French delegates had been meeting at the same time at Guidel in France to bring together the results of their reflections on the finality of the Institute. The results were published in a booklet of 127 pages entitled *Intersession*.⁴³ The content of the booklet will be described in the following chapter. Meanwhile, it can be said that the quality of the reflection, the dynamism, the scope, and the integration of the themes in this publication, together with the consensus achieved by the participants in the discussions, provided evidence that the leadership role for the second session might well be passing from the American group to the French.

July 1967: Meeting of the US Delegates at Memphis

The group of delegates and alternates who came together on July 22 at Christian Brothers College in Memphis, Tennessee, was no longer the cohesive and single-minded delegation that had met a year and a half earlier in Plano. Part of the reason had to do with personalities and leadership. Although Brother William Quinn was no longer Visitor and had resigned as president of the Visitors Conference, he had agreed to continue as head of the delegation to the Chapter. As time went on, however, Brother Leo Kirby, in his role as the American Assistant, seemed to feel that it was up to him to provide a certain amount of initiative and control. This would often take the form of inviting Brothers of his own choosing to the delegates' meetings or making other intrusions on the planned agenda. It would be hard to imagine two more different personalities. Quinn's temperament, bolstered by his training as a scientist and mathematician, favored organization, order, and process; Kirby's style featured imagination, spontaneity, and enthusiasm, with more attention to persons than to process. As a result, it was less clear than formerly who would set the priorities and how the delegation might best cooperate in a common effort.

Conflicts, or at least differences of opinion, began to appear among the delegates themselves, depending on the commissions to which they had been assigned and the vigor with which they campaigned for specific points of view. The problems that would soon erupt throughout the Institute between tradition and innovation, the conflicting perceptions of the young and the old, were already becoming apparent at the Memphis meeting. The 15 pages of the Memphis minutes provide an almost verbal account of these exchanges, with the speakers identified by name.⁴⁴

After the minutes of the previous meeting had been accepted, the next item was the approval of the agenda. Usually a routine matter, this question precipitated a storm. In addition to Brother Sylvain Bonenfant, the Assistant for Canada, and Brother Leo Belanger, the Visitor of Toronto, Brother Leo Kirby had invited Brother Charles Reutemann, recently appointed Director of the Sangre de Cristo Center, and Brother Raymond Mueller, who had flown over from Europe to present a paper on celibacy and community prepared by his fellow expatriates. Some of the delegates resented this usurpation by the Assistant of the delegation's control over its personnel and agenda. The two invitees had to wait in an anteroom while the group debated whether or not to admit them to the meeting. The admission of Brother Charles posed no real problem. However, aspects of the paper

Brother Raymond had come to present were objectionable to many delegates. After long discussion, it was proposed to accept the *fait accompli* and give him a hearing. The proposal to admit was accepted with 14 in favor and 7 still opposed.⁴⁵



The US Delegates and other aides gathered at Memphis, Tennessee. *First row:* Brothers Raphael Bodin, Joseph Finnegan, Thomas Matthews, Luke Grande, Leo Kirby, Sylvain (Canadian Assistant), Jerome West, E. Joseph Melofchik, Leo Belanger (Visitor of Toronto). *Second row:* Brothers Gabriel Costello, Maurice Anglim, Francis Huether, Luke Salm, William Quinn, Bernard Peter May, Gregory Robertson, James Carey. *Third row:* Brothers Augustine Loes, Richard Neville, David Ryan, Luke Roney, Charles Reutemann, Raymond Mueller, Paul Figueroa, Basil Rothweiler.

Organization

The sessions at the Memphis meeting devoted to organizational matters consisted for the most part in an updating on matters of personnel, modifications in the Rules of Procedure, and communication with the center at Rome. Brother James Brown of the New Orleans-Santa Fe District had tabulated the results of the voting nationwide on the 21 propositions prepared at the Lockport meeting.⁴⁶ All the propositions had been accepted with a huge majority. Those that showed the greatest minority opposition concerned the priesthood, the habit, and the move to discontinue the vow of stability.⁴⁷ Since each of the propositions contained several ideas, it was not always clear what the negative votes might mean. The delegates reaffirmed their desire that the revised Rule and Constitutions should contain general principles only, with details left to the regional and district Chapters.⁴⁸

By far, most of the available time at the Memphis meeting was devoted to the discussion of position papers. On arrival, the delegates found a thick dossier of unsolicited papers on a great variety of topics from a variety of authors. Some of these papers were simply excerpts from previously published writings of the Brothers; others were personal essays by Brothers who felt they had something to say.⁴⁹ Although these papers were never formally discussed, much less endorsed, many of them were afterwards published in *Points of View*.⁵⁰ The delegates at Memphis already had more than enough to occupy them with the papers on finality that had been assigned at previous meetings, to which were added, with some reluctance, the paper from the student Brothers in Europe on celibacy and community.

Apostolic Finality of the Institute

Since the Institute had been founded historically for a specific educational mission in the Church, its finality or purpose was traditionally associated with the educational apostolate of the Brothers. At the first session of the Chapter, once the option of the priesthood was rejected, the Commission on Apostolic Finality saw the need for the Chapter to study the nature and the purpose of the Institute more positively and in all of its dimensions. During the intersession, as already noted, the French delegates had held several meetings on the subject of finality and published their conclusions in *Intersession*. The American delegates, reluctant to devote their attention exclusively to the matter of finality, had nonetheless commissioned a series of papers on the subject. These were ready for the Memphis meeting in July. The discussion at Memphis took place in two phases. On the first day the papers were presented and discussed in a general way; on the next day, the delegates attempted to cull from the papers elements that could be used at the Chapter to express the position of the Brothers in the United States.

The first paper to be presented was that of Brother Augustine Loes on the service of the poor. While admitting that the service of the poor was only one aspect of the mission of the Institute, he thought it was an important one that needed attention.⁵¹ Specifically he argued, first, for preferential and expanded involvement of the Institute in its traditional work for the poor and, secondly, for imagination and initiative to develop new programs to meet the educational needs of the poor. Insisting that the service of the poor is “the primary element in the purpose of the Brothers,” he based his argument on papal teaching, the mind and practice of the Founder, and the special opportunities for religious persons in view of their poverty, their celibacy, and their experience of community life.⁵²

The paper provoked a lively discussion. Some argued that there was too much emphasis on poverty and the poor. Others felt that the proposals were impractical, granted the financial problems in maintaining the Catholic school system. One delegate predicted that indigence would be overcome in industrial societies "in a generation or two," and, it was added, vocations do not come from schools for the poor. To focus the discussion, it was formally moved that the paper be accepted as a position paper that Brother Augustine might use to influence the Chapter. At this point, many delegates spoke in its defense: the paper would help reorient our schools and the Brothers in a certain direction; it would challenge the Brothers to sensitize all their students to the needs of the poor; it provided a necessary stimulus to take this aspect of our finality more seriously. The motion to accept the paper passed with two negative votes.

Brother Luke Salm then presented the working paper he had prepared on the religious life in relation to the finality of the Institute.⁵³ The paper had been commissioned for fear that the French would address the finality of the Institute exclusively in terms of the apostolate. So directed, Brother Luke invited a group of Christian Brother theologians to meet at Manhattan College in New York to address the concrete question: Why be a consecrated religious rather than an apostolic lay person in the world?⁵⁴

By that time, however, the French paper on finality had been published in *Intersession*. In view of the comprehensive treatment therein of religious life in relation to the apostolate, it seemed unnecessary to prepare a fully developed American paper covering the same ground. Instead, the theologians were able to agree on five propositions to offer to the delegates as a summary of some important elements of the religious life. In addition, their working paper contained one-page summaries of specific aspects of religious life developed by each of the theologians. Discussion of the paper was tabled so that Brother Luke could work with a small group to prepare a consensus statement of the position of the American delegates on religious life. As eventually adopted, the statement took the form of propositions in seven tightly-constructed paragraphs on the following themes: religious life is rooted in baptism; is governed by the Gospel; is apostolic; differs from the life of Christians in the world; symbolizes the difference by a celibate life in community; establishes structures subordinated to the persons who form the community and are served by it; has an ecclesial dimension exemplified by some form of public profession.⁵⁵

During the Dunrovin meeting, Brother William Quinn had advocated some sort of declaration on the religious life to represent the

mind of the delegation. As this seemed to be unnecessary, he proposed instead that the delegation prepare a letter that would be sent at the end of the Chapter to each Brother by the Superior in the name of all the members of the 39th General Chapter. An example of such a letter was distributed and discussed. A motion to make the recommendation to the Superior was passed unanimously.⁵⁶

Celibacy and Community

The paper that gave rise to the most sustained disagreement at Memphis was presented by Brother Raymond Mueller, representing the authors. The paper had its origins when Brother Leo, the Assistant, invited nine American Brothers studying in Europe to come together to address the two topics of celibacy and community.⁵⁷ Meeting at Amsterdam in May and in Tübingen in June, with the Assistant and his secretary present, the group endorsed six propositions on celibacy and four on community. Commentaries on the ten propositions, intended to summarize the discussion and provide a detailed rationale, were coauthored by Brothers Raymond Mueller and Thomas Loome and subscribed to by the entire group at the Tübingen meeting. The paper was then circulated to the delegates and was eventually published in *Points of View*.

The essential thrust of the paper can be seen in its definition of celibacy as “the commitment, freely and deliberately undertaken, to abstain from marriage in order to render oneself more available for the loving service of one’s fellow men.”⁵⁸ This emphasis on service, the deliberate exclusion of chastity from the description of the Brothers’ celibacy, and the lack of any reference to a specifically Christian dimension to celibacy, gave rise to a storm of opposition from the delegates.

Almost everyone spoke against the paper, some more strongly than others. In an attempt to rescue what was valuable in it, Brother Augustine Loes offered an introductory statement to clarify the limited scope of the paper.

The propositions and commentary on community caused less of a problem, although some objected to the negative attitude toward traditional norms and structures. The paper stressed that community is not a “given” determined by personnel lists, but rather a reality that has to be created. Support for the Brother’s celibacy in witness to service and brotherhood was seen as integral to the community to be created. Again, Brother Augustine volunteered to balance the paper with a short introduction admitting the need for structures and situating the local community within the wider communities of the District and the Institute.

In two separate motions it was voted, but not unanimously,⁵⁹ that the two parts of the paper, together with the introductory explanation by Brother Augustine for each section, be referred “as an American contribution” to the appropriate commissions of the Chapter.⁶⁰

Roads Leading to Rome

With the end of the Memphis meeting, the American delegates were fortified as never before with position papers on every conceivable subject. Although the papers themselves made little impact during the Chapter, the discussions had helped to clarify the delegates’ thinking, and also to bring to the fore some fundamental areas of tension and disagreement, either among the delegates themselves, or especially between the delegates and certain groups of younger Brothers.

Immediately after the Memphis meeting, the US delegates who were members of the Chapter’s Commission on Apostolic Finality traveled to Montreal to meet there with other members of the Commission from Canada, Latin America, and Spain to discuss the finality of the Institute. The meeting was chaired by Brother Michel Sauvage. The very lively discussion centered on the propositions in the French *Intersession*. At Montreal, too, it was evident that varied points of view, held with conviction and intensity, would have to be reconciled before the Chapter could arrive at a consensus on the finality of the Institute. With the opening of the second session only two months away, it seemed that the intersession had made the work of the Chapter considerably more complicated. How a semblance of order and unity would be brought out of that chaos will be described in the narrative to follow.

Notes

1. *Report on Decisions of the Regional Conference*, September 30–October 2, 1966. Copy in ANYD.

2. Circular 388, *New Year’s Greeting and Message*, January 26, 1967.

3. The minutes of the meeting held the following April in Dunrovin have this comment: “A note of gratitude and appreciation should be expressed to Brother Superior on his recent Circular #388 with its fresh viewpoint and its encouragement of dialogue in our communities,” paragraph 11 e. Copy in ANYD.

4. Letter to the American Delegation to the Second Session of the General Chapter “from Brother Assistant, Jan. 28, 1967” in the agenda circulated prior to the meeting of February 10–12, 1967. This paragraph was also included in the minutes circulated after the meeting, but in the minutes of the

April meeting at Dunrovin this paragraph was deleted from the official minutes. Copies in ANYD.

5. Letter of February 4, 1967, to "Brother Damian + Visitors." Copy for distribution to delegates in ANYD.

6. There were seven propositions voted on the subject of representation at the second session. Five were accepted unanimously, one by a vote of 14 to 4. A proposition to have sub-Districts represented by a voting delegate was defeated by voice vote. See the minutes dated February 11, 1967. Copy in ANYD.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid. See also the letter of February 20, 1967, from the author to Brother Joel Damian (carbon in ANYD). A copy was circulated to the delegates with a cover letter from Brother Damian effectively amending the minutes. The personal reflections of the alternate delegate who made the suggestion concerning the secular institute were ordered deleted from the official minutes at the following meeting. Copies in ANYD.

10. Minutes, paragraph 2. Copy in ANYD.

11. Ibid. paragraph 4. The minutes fail to mention that Brother Luke insisted that it was the president of the delegation who should contact the Assistant on the matter. See the letter to Brother Joel Damian of February 20, 1967 (carbon in ANYD) and the amendments to the minutes circulated to the delegates by Brother Damian on February 27.

A letter from Brother Leo Kirby, Assistant, addressed to "Dear Brother Visitor" and stamped "Received March 12, 1967," reads in part, "The French Brothers and Finality: I have spoken to the Superior General and the French Assistant, Brother Patrice, on this point. Both state that the French Brothers have no intention of spending the whole Chapter on finality, although they feel that they would want to settle this problem before anything else, since no other problem can be solved neatly and thoroughly until this one is settled. To the Superior and myself this would seem to make good sense. I might add that the two other subjects tied in with finality, the apostolate [sic] and community, are also being studied in some depth by the French." Copy in ANYD.

In fact, the "two other subjects" were *consecration* and community, apostolate being identified by the French with finality and not "tied in with" it. This matter assumed great importance in the elaboration of what would become the Declaration.

12. *Propositions on which the American Delegation to the General Chapter is Seeking the Opinions of the Brothers*, with cover letter from Brother Joel Damian, Executive Secretary, dated February 15, 1967. Copy in ANYD.

13. Noted in the minutes, paragraph 2. Copy in ANYD.

14. Ibid. It is the personal view of the author that this concern reflected a fear that the French were assuming the leadership role for the second session, and that the Finality Commission would begin to dominate the other commissions.

15. Minutes, paragraph 3, to which is appended the full text of the resolution. Copy in ANYD.

16. Ibid., paragraph 4. It might be said that by the end of the first session, once the major objectives of the American delegation had been achieved, the experts from the United States had little to contribute. More significant was the presence as observers at the second session of American representatives from mission territories.

17. Letter from Rome dated March 16, 1967, to Brother Damian urging that a “summer workshop or brain-trust” be set up at Lockport to compose papers and to translate them. Copy in ANYD. At the Dunrovin meeting delegates did not think this would be necessary, though they did agree that the papers be translated. Minutes, paragraph 8.

18. The minutes of the Dunrovin meeting note that the Assistant reminded the delegates that papers prepared by American graduate students in Europe on community, celibacy, and the spirituality of the Christian Brother could be made available (paragraph 5). More than likely the reference here is to one paper that had already been prepared by student Brothers on celibacy and community. It was afterwards distributed to the delegates, discussed at the July meeting at Memphis (see below), and eventually published in *Points of View*, pp. 309–372.

19. *Points of View*, Saint Mary’s Press, Winona, MN. No date.

20. It became necessary at the Chapter to distinguish official papers originating in the commissions from the many position papers that began to multiply once the idea caught on. The minutes of the Dunrovin meeting reflect a similar concern: “It was agreed that all papers presented as the viewpoint of the American delegation be carefully scrutinized before it [sic] be given the status of a ‘position’ paper of the American Brothers” (paragraph 8).

21. The Brother assigned to do the research was Brother Raymond O’Neill, one of the translators at the first session, who was returning to New York after doctoral study in Spain. As early as January 10, he had circulated out of the New York Provincialate a single-spaced two-page request for suggestions from the Brothers on questions relating to Christian education and the finality of the Institute. Copy in ANYD. He later extended the survey to bishops and diocesan officials, but the material became too vast and nothing ever came of the project. Brother Augustine, busy as he was in his first year as Visitor of New York, took upon himself a paper on the service of the poor, which created extensive discussion at the subsequent meeting of the delegates in Memphis.

22. The authors were Brothers Augustine Loes, Kevin Hargadon, John Greeley, Paul Wilson, and Timothy Balfe. John and Timothy were doctoral students in theology, Kevin and Paul in psychology. Paul Wilson came to the Chapter as an expert in psychology. There is no evidence that the paper had much impact on the Chapter or even on the American delegates. It was published in *Points of View* where it occupies 35 pages.

23. Brother Michel was not able to accept the invitation.

24. Minutes, paragraph 5.

25. Ibid.

26. As summarized in the minutes, paragraph 10, it is not clear how the points to be made in the Quinn declaration would be different from the principles in the Rule.

27. Minutes, paragraph 11.

28. In March of that same year, Brother Léon Aroz had been awarded the STD degree in missiology from the Gregorian University in Rome, thus becoming the first Brother since the Founder to hold the doctorate in theology.

29. The author has never perceived Gabriel Moran as a threat, but rather has always had great respect for his theological acumen, although not always agreeing with his every thought. Working with Gabriel Moran at Manhattan College, the author was pleased to give support as needed and has ever since remained on friendly terms with him.

30. The author has the impression that Brother Leo had always been in awe of the more established college professors, including Brothers Luke Salm and Gabriel Costello, who had been elected by the New York Brothers to accompany him, then the Visitor, as chapter delegates. He seemed much more at home, for the time being at least, with the younger scholars who had come under his aegis when he was Director in Washington, although many of them eventually disappointed his expectations.

31. See note 16, above.

32. *Survey Relative to a Mission Secretariat for the American Brothers' Missions*, Report #1, February 1, 1967. Copy in ANYD.

33. Written remarks by Brother Philip Nelan, appended to the relevant documents, March 25, 1991. Manuscript original in ANYD.

34. The certificate of incorporation was duplicated and circulated as *Mission Council Supplement*, #9. Copy in ANYD.

35. When Brother Gabriel Moran declined the invitation to act as a theological consultant, the author was invited by Brother Leonard Courtney to assume that role. At first he accepted, but after reading the draft of the first chapter of the study that was circulated, he withdrew, convinced that any theological input he might bring would only intrude on the empirical process involved in the study. The original of the letter of invitation from Brother Leonard and carbons of the replies of Brother Luke Salm are in ANYD.

36. Letter sent from Lockport on May 6. Copy in ANYD.

37. Circular letter from Brother Leonard Courtney dated June 12, 1967. Copy in ANYD.

38. William Ammentorp, University of Minnesota with Brian Fitch, Research Assistant, University of Minnesota, *The Committed: A Sociological Study of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's College Press, 1968).

39. Letter of May 9, 1967 addressed to the US delegates and alternates. Copy in ANYD.

40. Circular 390, *The 39th General Chapter Second Session*, June 6, 1967.

41. Eight editors were appointed to work under the direction of Michel Sauvage, liaison Assistant with the Government Commission: four French-speaking, two English-speaking, and two Spanish-speaking. See *Note au sujet du Prologue de la Règle*, 2.1.d by Michel Sauvage. The author has a copy.

42. Circular 390, p. 5.

43. The booklet contains only scanty publication data. The cover bears the title of the Institute followed by the legend *Assistances de France et des Missions Francophones*, the title *INTERSESSION* in capitals, and the source as Rome, Via Aurelia, 476. At the bottom of the title page is the notation, *Textes revus ou composés par les Frères Assistants Félicien Marie, Michel Sauvage, Patrice*. Copy in ANYD.

44. *Minutes of the Meeting of the American Delegation*, Memphis, July 22–23, 1967. Copy in ANYD.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

47. *Ibid.*, appendix annexed. The text of the propositions with the total vote on each and a sampling of remarks by the respondents, together with a commentary by Brother James Brown, can be found in *Points of View*, pp. 408–424.

48. *Minutes*, p. 7.

49. The author has preserved in his dossier, which has since been deposited in the ANYD, ten such papers, all printed in various colors.

50. In *Points of View*, see Section III "On the Nature of our Religious Life," and Section IV "The Vows." No distinction is made between papers assigned or endorsed by the chapter delegates and those that came from personal initiative.

51. Later published in *Points of View*, pp. 189–206.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 205–206.

53. *The Religious Life and the Finality of the Institute of the FSC*. Copy in ANYD.

54. In addition to Brother Luke, the theologians involved were Brothers Gabriel Moran, Director of the Graduate Program at Manhattan College; Kevin Gioella, who was teaching catechetics in the program that summer; John Greeley, of the novitiate staff at Narragansett; and John McDonough, formerly Director of Scholastics at Saint Mary's College, California, and enrolled at the time in the Manhattan Theology Program. Except for Brother Luke, all have since left the Institute.

55. Minutes, pp. 4–5.

56. Minutes, p. 6, with annex. Copy in ANYD.

57. The Brothers were William Beatie (San Francisco District) studying philosophy at Louvain, Geoffrey Kelly (Baltimore) studying catechetics at Lumen Vitae, Robert Laube (LI-NE) studying theology at the Lateran in Rome, Thomas Looime (San Francisco) studying philosophy in Tübingen, Donald Mouton (New Orleans-Santa Fe) studying theology at the Institut Catholique in Paris, Raymond Mueller (LI-NE) beginning theological study in Tübingen, John O'Donnell (New York) studying philosophy in Lille, John Barry Ryan studying liturgy at Strasbourg, Thomas Ryan (LI-NE) studying scripture in Rome, and Stephen Simms (New Orleans-Santa Fe) studying theology in Lyons. All except Brothers William Beatie and Donald Mouton have since left the Institute.

58. *Points of View*, p. 312 and again on p. 320.

59. Minutes, pp. 12 and 15.

60. The report of the discussion on celibacy and community as presented by Brother Mueller, including the introductions provided by Brother Augustine, occupies six full pages of the minutes of the Memphis meeting, pp. 9–15.

5

The 39th General Chapter Second Session (1967)

With the intersession coming to an end in the summer of 1967, and just about one year after the close of the first session, the Superior General and his Assistants met for ten days at Albano outside Rome to plan for the session that was scheduled to open on September 20. The extent and variety of the issues yet to be resolved must have been a matter of grave concern. Without some attempt to sort out the issues in advance and at least to suggest a plan of action, the Chapter might well have gone on forever. The report of the meeting, which was circulated to all the capitulants, reflects something of the new Superior's logical mind and genius for organization.¹

Organization of the Second Session

According to the plan worked out by the Superior and the Assistants, the subject matter of the session would bear on three areas: a general declaration on the Brother in the world of today, or some other way of presenting the nature and end of the Institute; a more detailed study of the topics assigned to each of the commissions; and, finally, a text of the Rules and Constitutions. The time constraints were evident: the opening had already been set for September 30, the closing could be no later than December 16. The first week was already committed to a "study week" presided over by a series of invited speakers. Almost another week would be lost with the ceremonies attendant on the canonization of Brother Benilde that was scheduled for late October. This left a total of ten weeks of five and a half working days each to complete the business. The proposed timetable expected that the Commission on Apostolic Finality would be ready in the first working week with its draft of a declaration, and that the Rule Commission would be ready to present the main lines of the revised Rules and Constitutions. The program worked out somewhat differently, but the schematization of the issues to be settled did serve to keep the session focused on the essentials.

Early Arrivals

In mid-August, when the Romans abandon their steaming city to the tourists, the redactors appointed to sort out the responses to the fifth draft of the Rule and Constitutions arrived at the motherhouse. They set to work under the direction of Brother Michel Sauvage, whose capacity for work and for getting work out of other people is legendary. By September 15 all the members of the Rule Commission and the Finality Commission, as well as the presidents of all the Commissions, the moderators, the members of the newly-appointed press bureau, and a host of support personnel were settled in the motherhouse. In effect, the work of the session was already well underway a good two weeks before the scheduled opening.

A most pleasant surprise greeted the newly arrived English-speaking delegates, who were again to be housed in the second novitiate building. All the old camp-style furniture had been discarded and replaced with new beds, ample desks, and shelving, all of contemporary design. Most astounding of all was the shower that had been installed in each room, with the capability of hot and cold running water, which was available most of the time. Some of the reconstruction work was still going on when the first arrivals came on the scene. During the day, the building was a perpetual anvil chorus, with the hammers and saws of the workers accompanied by their portable radios and their impromptu renditions of Italian operatic arias. The noise and the disruption were a small price to pay for the much-needed improvements.

Another surprise awaited the Americans who, during the first session, had to use the tennis courts at the Philippine Seminary next door. To their delight, they found that a set of tennis courts had been built just behind the second novitiate building. This was part of a long-range plan of the new Superior to provide more opportunities for fresh air and active exercise, especially for the young Brothers resident in the motherhouse and following programs of study or renewal in Rome. Meanwhile, the chapter delegates, Americans especially but not exclusively, were happy to use the facilities.

The comment was made that these improvements were a welcome and unforeseen fringe benefit from the American leadership in the motherhouse. Yet the American Superior was not engaged in a process of Americanizing the motherhouse, much less the Institute. From the moment of his election, he was sensitive to Brothers of every nationality, friendly to all but partial to none, least of all to his fellow Americans. For years the motherhouse had been so dominated by the French language and culture that it was known in Rome as the *Ile de France*. Brother Charles introduced Italian as the language of

the liturgy and fostered an Italian style in the kitchen and in the routine conduct of community business. The house would henceforth be known as the *casa generalizia*. The total effect was to change the center of the Institute in such way that, for all its sprawling Mussoliniera grandeur, it would become an open, comfortable, and friendly place where Brothers from everywhere could feel welcome and at home.²

Formal Opening

The formal ceremonies marking the opening of the second session began with a Mass of the Holy Spirit at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 30, 1967. The Eucharist was concelebrated by five English Benedictine Abbots who were in Rome for their own General Chapter. The Bulletin of the Chapter notes: "The splendor of the Gregorian chants, the recitation of the vernacular prayers in four languages (French, Spanish, English, and Italian) objectified a union that was present in the hearts of all the Brothers."³ Some of those present, however, found the emphasis on the monastic tradition in the homily was not the most appropriate message for an apostolic institute such as the FSC.⁴

On Sunday morning, October 1, 1967, at precisely 8:45, after again invoking the help of the Holy Spirit, Brother Charles Henry declared to the delegates assembled in the chapter hall that the second session of the 39th General Chapter was now formally opened.⁵ Unlike the previous session, where the delegates had been seated according to seniority, this time places were assigned alphabetically according to religious names. For the Americans, this put the Brothers from New York and New Orleans-Santa Fe far up front and the California Brothers in the rear of the hall near the observers, with the mid-westerners appropriately somewhere in the middle.⁶ Although the Chapter had officially abandoned religious names for the Institute, it was deemed wiser to retain them for the delegates at the second session so as to provide continuity in the record.

With Brother Sylvain Bonenfant, the recently elected Canadian Assistant, as moderator, the business of seating the delegates was accomplished smoothly. Resignations from those who for one reason or another could not return to the Chapter were accepted, their alternates seated, and the right of the press bureau and observers to attend the sessions was established. Among those not returning were Brothers I. Philip, elected delegate from Saint Louis, who was replaced by Joel Damian; Philip-Antoon, former Vicar; Armel-Felix, former Econome; Aubert-Joseph, former Assistant; Mutien-Clement, former Director of the Second Novitiate. All of these had the right to continue

as delegates, but preferred to be replaced by their successors in office. One substitution that attracted little notice at the time was the replacement of Brother Omer-Regis from Clermont-Ferrand by Brother Paul-Antoine Jourjon, who would be a major influence on the revision of the text of the Rule.⁷

A more complicated question concerned a proposal to admit as delegates the elected representatives of two Districts that had been formed since the Chapter was convoked. The motion to admit them was brought to the floor by Brother D. John as spokesman for the US delegates. During the intersession, they had taken a strong position in favor of seating Brother Maurice Anglim, the Visitor of the newly-formed District of Central States. Since the same situation prevailed in Seville, the two cases had to be treated together. Brother Maurice-Auguste, the Procurator General, argued against the proposal as contrary to the Book of Government and, consequently, not likely to meet with Vatican approval. The matter was deferred until the new Central Commission could be formed. When the motion was brought back to the floor at the meeting on Sunday, October 8, Brother Maurice Anglim was allowed to speak as an observer to plead his case. In opposition, Brother Lawrence O'Toole threatened to open up the whole question of representation for his Irish missionary Subdistricts. The Procurator General continued to oppose the proposal on legal grounds. At that point, Brother John offered to second any motion to withdraw the proposal. Brother Luke Salm made the motion to withdraw, which passed with a large majority. The Visitors of Central States and Seville were allowed to continue as observers.⁸

The remainder of the first week was divided between business sessions in general assembly and study sessions directed by guest speakers. The first order of business was to elect a new set of officers for the Chapter. Secretaries and tellers were elected first. A preliminary vote for the office of Commissary showed a clear preference for Brother Wilfrid Abban, the Visitor of England, a choice ratified by a large majority in the definitive vote.⁹ Brothers D. John and Nil Ambrose returned as moderators, with Brother Norberto-Philippe of Peru-Bolivia joining them as the Spanish-speaking member of the team in charge of the actual conduct of the meetings. Commissions also were asked to hold new elections for their officers.¹⁰ Except for replacing absentees, most Commissions re-elected the officers from the first session.

A few modifications were made to the daily schedule to provide more time not only for recreation but also for reading, informal meetings, and the preparation of reports. It was decided to schedule a working meeting on Sunday morning so as to leave all day Thursday free. When some delegates expressed concern that the time for prayer



39th General Chapter, Second Session. Brother Wilfrid Abban Costello, from the District of England, newly-elected Commissary, flanked by Brothers D. John Quinn and C. Gabriel Costello, no relation of Brother Wilfrid Abban.

and spiritual exercises was being curtailed, five minutes was added to the time allotted in the morning for Lauds and meditation. Even so, the revised schedule was adopted by only a narrow majority.¹¹ Modifications were also made to the Rules of Procedure, the *Règlement*, as it was called. Although the debate was prolonged, the changes were few: the procedure for presenting and voting on reports was streamlined, with Commissions given more control over amendments to their propositions; greater majorities would be needed to change the rules in particular cases; observers would be allowed to participate in commission discussions and to vote in commission on all matters except the final report.

Invited Speakers

Although the original intention had been to devote the entire first week of the session to a study of the important themes of the Vatican Council,¹² the center of interest for most of the delegates lay either in the pending commission work or the solution of the organizational problems already described. Yves Congar, who had been scheduled to speak on Monday, October 2, had to cancel because of illness. Canon Charles Moeller, a Belgian *peritus* at the Council, agreed to make presentations on both *Lumen gentium* and *Gaudium et spes*, the two council documents on the Church. In the study sessions on Monday evening and Tuesday afternoon, he emphasized the openness of the Council with special attention to the four major documents:

Revelation, Liturgy, The Church, and The Church in the Modern World. It was evident from his presentation that he himself had played an important role in the development of the council texts.¹³

Wednesday afternoon, October 4, the delegates heard an address by Mr. James Morris, a Director of the Catholic Relief Services of the U.S. Catholic Conference, on the subject of world poverty. He did not offer many specific suggestions beyond reminding the Brothers of their duty to sensitize their students to the problems of the poor. Asked whether he thought the Brothers should leave the schools for direct social work, he affirmed the school as the work of the Brothers and the best means of making people aware of the problem of poverty.¹⁴

The most stimulating of the speakers turned out to be Brother Gabriel Moran, who gave two distinct presentations on Thursday morning.¹⁵ The first presentation was a commentary on the Vatican Decree on Revelation entitled *Dei Verbum*. Taking as his point of departure the Council's description of revelation as a present, personal encounter between God and humans in community, Moran stressed the reciprocity of the process. The high point of God's personal revelation is seen in the entire human life of Jesus, his death, resurrection, and communication of the Spirit. The reciprocity of the process means that "God is revealed in the 'letting be of being,' in things simply being themselves. The more things are true to themselves, the more truly they reflect the glory of God."¹⁶ The second talk on the catechetical implications of the Vatican Decree stressed three points: persons as the chief resource in religious education; a correct understanding of secularity as important for catechetical methodology; religion teaching as adult-centered.¹⁷

The Friday speaker was Bishop Butler, OSB, the Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, a convert to Catholicism and former Abbot of Downside Abbey in England. Referring to the Council's treatment of religious life in *Lumen gentium*, he expressed the hope that religious institutes would now turn away from narrow preoccupations with personal sanctification and matters of canon law to a more outward looking theological approach. Concerning *Perfectae caritatis*, he stressed that accommodated renewal would have to come from the inner life principles of the congregation. He warned against the narrow conservatism that leads to built-in obsolescence.¹⁸

The dominance of English-speaking presenters was remedied on Monday, October 9, when the entire day was given over to Señor Joaquin Ruiz Jimenez, former Ambassador from Spain to the Vatican, former Minister of Education in Spain, and President of *Pax Romana*. Speaking energetically and at great length on the role of lay people in

the Church, he urged a "healthy representation in the ecclesiastical organisms of the Church to make it more democratic."¹⁹

The accounts given in the Bulletin of these study sessions include summaries of the questions asked of the guest speakers. It is interesting that in almost all of these summaries, someone asks the speaker whether or not the Brothers should abandon work in the schools in favor of more direct social service.²⁰ In one case, the questioner is identified as the Superior General. It is not clear to what extent this theme represents a preoccupation of the editor of the Bulletin, a concern of the Superior, or a controverted issue among the delegates. In due course the issue would be addressed in a formal declaration putting emphasis on the schools, without excluding the possibility of other types of educational service of the poor.

Extracapitular Events

With the study week and the organizational details out of the way, the Commissions were free to address the substantive issues committed to their charge and to prepare appropriate proposals for discussion and vote in general assembly. This process filled the greater part of the time remaining. However, a few foreseen and unforeseen events engaged the attention of the delegates and served to interrupt the flow of the chapter's work.

The most extensive and impressive of these interruptions centered on the canonization of Brother Benilde on Sunday, October 29. Visiting Brothers from the home Districts began arriving as early as the previous Thursday. Most of the pilgrims coming from the United States were older Brothers, but a scattering of younger ones came from Districts that had held lotteries to determine who would make the trip to Rome. Some of the American Brothers studying in Europe, who had been encouraged by the Assistant to provide input for the second session, also made it to Rome for the canonization and for the chance to monitor the progress of the Chapter.

The Circular gives the official account of the canonization.

The Canonization of Brother Benildus was a joyful interlude in the work of the Chapter. With thousands of pilgrims arriving in Rome, the Capitulants were kept busy receiving groups and arranging details of the ceremony in Saint Peter's Basilica. . . . Sunday, October 29th, was a day of great joy for the whole Institute, a joy which was tempered, however, by our concern for the health of the Holy Father. The Cardinals and Bishops attending the Synod were present, as this was its closing ceremony; and in

the tremendous crowd thronging the Basilica, thousands of white rabats could be seen. It was really the Brothers' Day.²¹



30th General Chapter. Scene in the apse of Saint Peter's Basilica during the canonization of Saint Benilde. The ceremony also marked the closing of the bishops' synod. The Delegates were well placed in the tribune above, but crowded into a narrow space with only a few wooden benches. Many Delegates had to stand during the entire ceremony.

The canonization in Saint Peter's was followed by a triduum held in the church of Saint Louis of the French. The delegates were asked not to attend as a group since space was severely limited. The triduum ended on November 1, the feast of All Saints. A two-day holiday gave the capitulants a welcome break from chapter duties and their responsibilities for hosting visitors. Chapter work resumed in full force on Friday, November 3.

November 21, 1967, was a memorable day for several reasons. In the morning session Brother Félicien, the Assistant for the French missions, formally offered his resignation, which the Chapter accepted. After consultation with the Districts involved, Brother Divitien Bernard, the Visitor of Quimper, was elected his successor on the following Friday.

In the evening assembly on November 21, the Chapter was shocked to learn that one of the capitulants, Brother Mandale-Jean, the Visitor of Ottawa, had died in a local hospital. He had not been feeling well for a week or so, some said from food poisoning, but his condition was not thought to be serious. The day after his death, the entire Chapter went to the morgue of the hospital where the body

had been laid out. It was a gruesome scene, since Italian law forbids embalming for 24 hours after death, and enjoins that an electric bell be in the hand of the deceased. A funeral Mass was held in the generalate chapel the following day, while the body was returned to Canada, accompanied by Brother S. Leo, the Visitor of Toronto.

November 23 was the American Thanksgiving Day. The community Mass in the morning featured English-language hymns, everything from "Now thank we all our God" to "Kumbaya," which had rapidly become a favorite with the delegates.²² Since Thursday was a full free day, it was easy for the Americans to gather for the traditional turkey dinner with all the trimmings at the Scoglio di Frisio, a restaurant reputed to be a favorite haunt of the alumni of Notre Dame University. The place was crowded that day with all kinds of Americans exiled in Rome. With the menu featuring *tachino*, the Italian word for turkey, the waiter kept referring to the bird as "San Tachino, martyr." In addition, a roving Italian tenor sang Irish songs. He would start the first line and then the crowd would join in. All he had to do was lip-sync the rest.

It might be mentioned in this connection that the American group, superiors, delegates, experts, translators, and observers, all became rather knowledgeable about Roman restaurants, which they patronized frequently, sometimes to discuss business or to share expertise, sometimes just to escape from the dreary *soupé* served in the evening at the generalate. In those days before inflation, it was possible to get a decent restaurant meal for only a couple of dollars, which sounded like a fortune when translated into thousands of Italian lire. There were other diversions as well on the free days and sometimes in the evenings: movies in Italian or English, churches and museums galore, operas and concerts, including the amazingly professional performances of Brother Georges Ley on the generalate organ.

For the most part, however, it was serious business all day, five and a half days a week. The effectiveness of that work can best be understood by examining the documents that resulted: the Declaration, the Rule and the Constitutions, the Book of Government, and the other chapter documents.

The Declaration During the Intersession

The text of the Declaration as it was finally voted can best be understood in the light of its history. During the first session of the Chapter, after the decision to reject the option of the priesthood, the Apostolic

Finality Commission realized that a clear statement was needed on the nature and purpose of the Institute. Following the example of the Vatican Council, it was thought that such a statement might well take the form of a declaration on the Brother in the modern world. The Commission had urged that this topic provide a unifying theme for the entire second session. During the intersession, members of the Commission held a number of meetings to discuss the multiple facets of the question. Considerations of geography, language, and, to some extent, ideology allowed for only indirect contact among the participants in various parts of the world. However, the final meeting, held in Montreal, succeeded in bringing representatives of the divergent points of view into direct contact and confrontation.

Meetings of French Delegates

From the beginning, the leadership in the Finality Commission was French. The president was the Visitor of Reims, the secretary was from Quimper, and the dominant voice was that of Brother Michel Sauvage, initially as an expert until his election as Assistant, whereupon he became a delegate by right. The only American officer was the representative to the Central Commission.²³ The opposition to the priesthood had been strongest among the French delegates. Close to the Founder in tradition, language, and culture, they thought of themselves as the defenders of the apostolic purpose for which the Institute had originally been founded.



Even before the Chapter opened, Brother Michel Sauvage had already published a landmark essay on the finality of the Institute in the light of the Founder's charism.²⁴ In an introductory section, Brother Michel stated three principles: the Founder's charism is addressed to the Brothers as living men; it is addressed to the Brothers, not as individuals, but as a community; it is determined by the objective

Brother Michel Sauvage, Assistant for Formation, was responsible during the Intersession for coordinating the work on the Declaration and the revision of the Rule.

facts concerning the Founder's aim and fundamental intention in founding the Institute. The heart of the essay then isolates five aspects of the Founder's charism: the apostolic aim; catechesis or education in the faith; the Christian school, where catechesis is integrated with education; the service of the poor, a sociological category of young people "far from salvation"; the apostolic aim to be achieved by a community of consecrated laymen. In retrospect, it can be seen that the principal elements that would eventually become the Declaration had already been identified.

On November 6 and 7, 1966, the French members of the Apostolic Finality Commission met in Paris to develop a strategy to make the finality of the Institute the focal point for all the work of the second session of the Chapter.²⁵ Also invited were members of the Chapter's Commission on Community Life to help relate the mission of the Brother to his community life and consecration. The procedural problem was to integrate areas assigned to other Commissions without intruding on their domain.²⁶ At the conclusion of the Paris meeting Brothers were assigned to develop working texts on five topics: the apostolic mission of the Brother in general; the service and evangelization of the poor; catechesis, the school, and the Christian school; the meaning of the religious consecration of the Brother; the demands and value of community life.²⁷

From March 23 to 27, 1967, the group reassembled at Perpignan near the Spanish border in the hope that the Spanish members of the Commission might attend. They did not appear, however, but the group was augmented by the presence of Brothers Leo Kirby and Patrice Marey, Assistants. As a team of the Regime that included Brothers Michel Sauvage and Raphael Martinez, the Assistant for Central America, they had prepared a series of texts for discussion. At Perpignan, the discussions in subgroups centered on three of these themes: the apostolic mission of the Institute in general; the evangelization of the poor; catechesis, the school, and the Christian school.²⁸ The fact that the apostolic mission was the only topic discussed at the Perpignan meeting, together with the emphasis in the Sauvage essay, led delegates in other parts of the world to conclude that the French were interested in defining the finality of the Institute solely in terms of apostolic mission.

When all the French delegates to the Chapter met at Guidel from April 9 to 16, 1967, to discuss the Perpignan texts, they began to study how to locate community life and religious consecration within the statement on the nature and purpose of the Institute. One of the practical conclusions of the meeting was the need to bring the study on the finality of the Institute into a much closer relationship with the

work of the Commission on Consecration and the Commission on Community Life. The report states: "It is not possible to speak of the finality of a *religious* Institute without reflecting on the significance of the witness of consecration and community, as well as the need to renew our consecrated life and our community life"29

In the following June, the French Assistancy published *Intersession* and circulated it widely among the chapter delegates scattered around the world.³⁰ This helped somewhat, but not completely, to temper the opposition to what was perceived as an overemphasis by the French on apostolic mission as the constitutive element in the purpose for which the Institute exists. In this regard, the contents and the sequence of the topics in *Intersession* are interesting. Chapter I is divided into three sections: the apostolic purpose of the Institute in general; the evangelization of the poor; catechesis, the school, and the Christian school. Chapter II has two sections that are described as "outlines" (*ébauches*): perspectives on community; perspectives on consecration. Both Chapters I and II are rather sketchy, mostly in outline form with occasional text in continuous paragraphs.

In time, the relatively short Chapter III served to focus the discussion and provide the framework upon which the text of the Declaration would be built. This chapter contains 38 propositions of a theoretical character, called *orientations doctrinales*, under the following headings: 1, The Mission of the Institute in the Church; 2, The Mission of Evangelization; 3, Service of the Poor; 4, The School and Catechesis; 5, Enterprises apart from the School; 6, Religious Consecration; 7, The Brothers' Community. There are eight additional proposals for action: five concerning ongoing formation and three referring to the structures of the Institute.³¹

Thus, at this early stage, by integrating, however tentatively, community and consecration with the apostolate, the French delegates were able to break through the neat division of the work of the Chapter according to Commissions. For them, at least, the *épine dorsale* was already a reality.

Meetings of US Delegates

The series of meetings held in the United States has already been described in some detail. From the beginning of the intersession, the American delegates were reluctant to accept the topic of finality as the dominant theme for the rest of the Chapter. They perceived the famous *épine dorsale* as an attempt by the French leadership in the Apostolic Finality Commission to take over the Chapter. The Americans preferred to prepare for the second session on the presumption

that the work would proceed in isolated commissions, with each addressing its appointed agenda.

The American paper on finality was produced by the faculty of the Washington scholasticate. Rather than start historically and existentially from the experience of the Founder as Sauvage had done, the Washington group, under the leadership of Brother John Greeley, preferred to begin with the teaching on religious life to be found in the documents of Vatican II. The authors wanted less emphasis on apostolic purpose and more on growth in holiness and personal development in community. They seemed particularly concerned to specify how the apostolic religious life differs from the life of apostolic lay persons in secular life.

As the first reports came through from the meeting at Perpignan, Brother Luke Salm, the US contact with the Apostolic Finality Commission, felt that he should alert the American delegates to the difference in the two approaches, especially since the French seemed at first to be neglecting the theology of the religious life as it was understood by the American theologians. Once *Intersession* was published, there was less reason for concern, and the idea of preparing an independent American position paper on finality was abandoned. Nevertheless, the delegates at Memphis did endorse a series of statements by American theologians describing the essential elements in religious life.³²

Meetings of Spanish-Speaking Delegates

At about the time the Americans were meeting in Dunrovin and the French in Guidel, the European members of the Chapter's Commission on Consecration met in Spain at Salamanca. The Assistants from France and Belgium were present, as was Brother Romaric-Paul, a delegate from France on the Commission, who had also been present at Perpignan and Guidel. All the others were Spanish, including the Vicar General and Brother Saturnino, who would now be a delegate as well as a *peritus*. Several professors from Salamanca were also present as experts for the meeting. As at Perpignan, the discussion centered on a text that had been prepared in Rome by the four Brother Assistants.³³ Subsequent events showed that the focus of this meeting on religious consecration typified the approach that the Spanish delegates would take to the nature and purpose of the Institute.

The Latin American delegates had a meeting of their own, with Brother Juan Fernando, the Assistant for Spain, in attendance. The meeting was held in Lima, Peru, from May 25 to June 8, 1967. The resolutions that were passed emphasized religious consecration as essential to the Institute of the Brothers in order to distinguish it from a

secular institute; the educational mission of the Institute as exercised principally, though not exclusively, in the school; preference for the education of the poor according to the needs and opportunities of each region; and the spirit of community, with special emphasis on obedience, as equally essential to the Institute.³⁴

Meeting of the Apostolic Finality Commission at Montreal

Originally intended and described in the minutes³⁵ as a meeting of the American subcommission, the meeting at Montreal in Canada was attended not only by delegates from the United States, Canada, and Latin America, but also by the Spanish Assistant and Brother Saturnino. Presided over and recorded by Brother Michel Sauvage, it was effectively a representative meeting of the entire Commission. The gathering was important because it brought together for the first time the divergent views on finality that had been developing during the course of the intersession.

The discussions were structured around the propositions in *Intersession* intended to provide the basic content for an eventual declaration on finality. From the beginning, it was evident that the Spanish group was strongly opposed to the analysis of finality proposed by the French delegates in *Intersession*, not so much on the basis of this or that wording, but because of the entire orientation and tone of the French analysis. At issue was the charge by the Spanish that the French were giving priority to the apostolate over religious consecration, which in their view was the primary and specific element that defines the life of the Brother. Everyone agreed that both elements had to be included; the impasse was over which had the priority.

As the discussions continued and became increasingly heated on both sides, it was evident that the Spanish wanted to start from an *a priori* and essentialist definition of religious life. By contrast, the French approach was more historical and existential, with the emphasis on the "life" as it was lived concretely in its totality, and with the apostolic thrust as an expression of a total religious response to the divine call. The Spanish bolstered their arguments with extensive citations from Vatican II on the nature and purpose of the religious life. The French countered with the view that the Council wanted to create a new approach to religious life by emphasizing its diverse forms rather than certain common and constitutive elements. The French interpreted the history of the foundation of the Institute as an original creation of the Founder, whose intention did not conform to the established forms of the "religious" congregations of his day. The Spanish insisted that the Founder intended all along to bring his foun-

dation to the point where it would be recognized as having all the essential components of a religious institute.

The delegates from the United States contributed to the discussion in two ways. The propositions on the elements of the religious life adopted at the Memphis meeting helped to some extent to bridge the gap between the Spanish and the French, and at one point were used as the basis of discussion in place of the propositions from *Intersession*. Ultimately more significant was the presence of Brother Augustine Loes, a vigorous advocate for a strong statement on the service of the poor. This subject, also, engendered a great deal of controversy. Those who favored what could roughly be called the realist position stressed both the need to preserve traditional schools and the problems involved in establishing new works for the poor. Those who favored what might be called the idealist position stressed the normative value of the Founder's priorities and the need to expend greater effort, imagination, and personnel in doing this essential work of the Institute.

Before the Montreal meeting was over, all the principal elements that would have to be included in the eventual declaration had been thoroughly discussed: apostolic finality including service of the poor, catechesis, and the school; religious consecration; and community life. It was agreed that the text would bear the title "A Declaration on the Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today." The tone would thus be challenging and proclamatory, the content would be descriptive rather than analytic, the focus would be on the person of the Brother in the concrete reality of his life. Brother Michel Sauvage, armed with copious notes, was commissioned to prepare a draft of such a declaration to present to the full Commission when it reassembled in Rome two weeks prior to the opening of the second session of the Chapter.

The Finality Commission at Work on the Declaration

By Monday, September 18, most of the 21 members of the Commission had returned to Rome. After some preliminary meetings, they were ready to begin to discuss the draft text of the Declaration that Brother Michel Sauvage had prepared after the Montreal meeting. The draft was divided into ten chapters: 1, Renewal; 2, Fidelity to the Founder; 3, Signs of the Times; 4, Constitutive Elements in the Brother's Vocation; 5, Personal Synthesis; 6, The Poor; 7, Christian Education; 8, The School; 9, Consecration; 10, Community.³⁶ Two full days



39th General Chapter, Second Session. Commission II at work on the Declaration. The forehead of Brother Michel Sauvage is visible at the far end of the table. Seated two places to his left is Brother Thomas Matthews, Visitor of St. Louis. The author, wearing glasses, is at the center of the table. Brother Augustine Loes, also with glasses, is partially obscured by the President of the Commission, seated at the head of the table.

were devoted to a discussion of the first three chapters, with relatively minor criticisms of the style and tone.

From the beginning, the Spanish delegates, with Brother Saturnino as their spokesman, argued for a more essentialist analysis of the nature and finality of the Institute.³⁷ The issue was joined when, in the afternoon meeting of Wednesday, September 20, Brother Saturnino presented an alternate 20-page draft text for consideration by the Commission. The text had been prepared by the Spanish delegates at a meeting held in Salamanca shortly after the Montreal Meeting.³⁸ After a prologue on fidelity to the Founder, there were three major sections and an appendix, presented as theses defended in traditional theological argumentation: (1) The Brother Is a Religious in the Full Sense of the Word; (2) The Brother Is a Religious of the Active Life, an Apostolic Religious; (3) An Exact Definition of Apostolic Finality. The appendix was entitled "Obedience as a Characteristic of Religious Life."³⁹ The Commission showed little enthusiasm for the text presented by the Spanish, and continued to work from the draft of Brother

Michel. On the following day, Brother Saturnino failed to appear at the commission meeting. In his absence, the text on the principal elements of the Brother's vocation, as proposed by Brother Michel and amended by the Commission, was approved as a basis for discussion.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, rumors began to spread through the generalate that Brother Michel Sauvage and the Apostolic Finality Commission were trying to turn the Institute of the Brothers into a secular institute. This whispering campaign proved to be unsettling for the large numbers of delegates already present in the generalate to prepare the work of the other Commissions. The use of the expression "consecrated laymen" rather than "lay religious" was cited as part of a movement to secularize the Institute, and a strong letter was sent to the Commission by an Irish delegate insisting on the use of the canonical category. On the morning of Friday, September 22, the Commission had to take time out to prepare a statement that it had not the least intention of transforming the Institute into a secular institute; that the term "consecrated laymen" is absolutely synonymous with "lay religious"; that religious consecration would be given prominence in the Declaration; that a spiritual and pastoral document demands a different kind of language from that of the customary canonical categories. The statement was voted unanimously in the Commission by secret ballot and circulated to the delegates on the other Commissions.⁴¹

The Apostolic Finality Commission quickly realized that it would be impossible to move forward on the text of any declaration until the conflict centering around religious consecration was resolved. On Saturday, September 23, the Commission spent the entire day on this topic.⁴² The impasse was broken when it was finally agreed to combine the sections on apostolic finality and religious consecration with a strong emphasis on their interrelation and integration. It was later decided to incorporate community as an integral element of the same chapter. As a concession to the concerns of the Spanish, it was agreed that religious consecration would be treated first among the elements to be integrated. This integration of the three basic elements of apostolic mission, religious consecration, and community life, became the theme of Chapter V of the Declaration and an enduring contribution to a renewed understanding of the nature and purpose of the Brother's vocation.⁴³

During the days that remained before the opening of the second session, the Commission worked on the chapters of the Declaration dealing with the poor, catechesis, and the schools. The discussions centered on the perennial questions of priority for the service of the poor, Christian education in an increasingly secularized world, and the

expansion of the educational mission of the Institute beyond the schools. The disagreements in preparing the text of these sections were concerned less with substance than with how to achieve a balanced presentation in a compact and forceful style. Thus the Commission was able to review the entire draft text before the opening of the second session, but it was still a long way from having a text ready for presentation in a general assembly of the Chapter.

Once the Chapter had been formally reconvened, and the preliminaries were out of the way, it was already October 9 before the Commission could resume its work on a definitive draft of the Declaration. To facilitate the process, Brother Michel Sauvage left Rome for a nearby retreat house, where he spent several days preparing a fresh text for study.⁴⁴

It is sometimes said that Brother Michel is the author of the Declaration. Although he was the driving force (sometimes literally) behind the work of the Commission, it should be clear from all that has been said thus far that the text was the result of an intense and cooperative effort. When Brother Michel took off to prepare the final text for study, he was armed with all the written documents, the minutes of meetings all over the world, and the input from the most recent exchanges in the Commission. Even so, the text he prepared over that weekend was further amended in the Commission, some sections eliminated and others highlighted, and more compromises reached on controverted issues to provide for divergent points of view. Particular contributions were made by Brother Saturnino, whose insistence on consecration had brought that element of the Brother's vocation into better focus and integration with apostolic mission; Brothers Augustine Loes and Honoré (from Reims), who were an important influence on the sections concerning the service of the poor; Brothers Luke Salm and Roland Lachance, from the United States and Canada respectively, who were usually responsible for ridding the text of duplication and excessive rhetoric.⁴⁵

Toward the end of October, the Commission had a revised text, incorporating all of the consensus arrived at through the discussions. Before a final vote was taken in commission, Brothers Michel, Saturnino, and Luke met to incorporate last-minute suggestions and to iron out any remaining difficulties.⁴⁶ This was concrete evidence that the Commission had finally achieved unity of vision and purpose, and that this consensus was reflected in the text. The text was ready and distributed to all the capitulants on Wednesday, October 23,⁴⁷ but its presentation to the entire Chapter in general assembly had to be put off until after the ceremonies surrounding the canonization of Brother Benilde.

Presentation of the Declaration in General Assembly

On Monday, November 6, 1967, the formal presentation of the text of the Declaration to the assembled Chapter was made in an oral report by Brother Bernard Merian, Secretary of the Commission. For some days, all the delegates had had in hand both the 10-page written report of the Commission as well as the Declaration itself. The report gave a brief history of the document, the spirit in which it was written, its basis in the notes of the Brothers and the discussions in commission, and a brief analysis of its contents and organization. The written report ends with this expressed wish (given here in translation): "The Second Commission hopes that the assembly will collaborate in the efforts of the Commission so that the 'Declaration,' once it has been studied and enriched, will be the work of the entire Chapter for the good of the Brothers and the Institute."⁴⁸ Immediately after the presentation, the assembly broke up into language groups, presided over by Brothers Michel, Saturnino, and Luke, to respond to questions on the content, the structure, and the style of the document. The role of the three theologians in making the presentations in language groups, and the consensus reflected in their response to questions in general assembly, went a long way toward assuring the delegates that the cultural and ideological differences in the Commission, and indeed in the Chapter, had effectively been overcome.⁴⁹ On the basis of these exchanges, the assembly overwhelmingly agreed to accept the Commission's text as the basis for discussion.⁵⁰

For the remainder of that week most of the general assemblies were devoted to a paragraph by paragraph discussion of the proposed text. Following the procedure used at Vatican II, as each chapter of the text was presented for a preliminary vote, capitulants could vote yes (approval), no (disapproval), or yes *juxta modum* (approval with written suggestion for an amendment to be forwarded to the Commission). Capitulants were also free to propose an amendment to the text to be voted then and there by the assembly, but this procedure was discouraged and it was rarely used. In any case, at this stage, all these votes were intended to guide the Commission in preparing a definitive draft of the text.

The order of discussion was determined by the listing of the constituent elements of the Brother's vocation in Chapter III. Thus Chapter V on integrating consecration and community with apostolic mission was discussed first;⁵¹ then Chapter VI on the poor,⁵² Chapter VII on Christian Education,⁵³ and Chapter VIII on the school.⁵⁴ Then the introductory chapters on renewal, fidelity to the Founder, and the signs of the times were discussed. The last to be treated was Chapter

IV on the personal synthesis of the integrating elements by each Brother.⁵⁵

By Saturday morning, November 11, all the chapters of the Declaration had been discussed, amendments suggested either orally or in writing, and voted. The votes were all positive, with about half of the positive votes registered as approval *juxta modum*. There were very few outright negative votes on any of the chapters, not even the most controversial. It was evident that the week spent on the text of the Declaration had helped the Chapter to realize that consensus on the fundamental issues was possible despite divergent backgrounds and points of view.

Final Redaction, Discussion, and Vote

For the next two weeks the Finality Commission worked overtime and in sub-commissions to give serious consideration to all of the suggestions made orally during the discussion in general assembly, as well as to the written suggestions (*modi*) submitted as required by the votes *juxta modum*. Altogether, 298 written or oral suggestions were received. Of these the Commission accepted 194; the others were considered either contradictory to the main thrust and the style of the document as a whole, or were found to be already contained either implicitly or explicitly in the text.⁵⁶ In this way many capitulants, not only the 21 members of the Commission, but also the authors of the 194 accepted suggestions, played a part in the elaboration of the Declaration's text. That fact is the best possible evidence that the document truly has the entire General Chapter as its author.

The final French text, comprising 53 paragraphs in 8 chapters, was presented to the general assembly on Tuesday, December 5. In addition, the Commission had prepared a printed report of 43 pages listing all the oral and written suggestions received, with an explanation of how the Commission dealt with each of them.⁵⁷ For the English-speaking delegates, as also for immediate diffusion to the Brothers at home, Brothers Augustine Loes and Luke Salm, members of the Commission, had prepared a translation to assure fidelity to the spirit of the Commission's text. The final review by the general assembly of the text, chapter by chapter, provoked very little additional discussion or criticism.

As required by the Rules of Procedure, the text entitled *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today—A Declaration* was presented for a final vote on the following day, Wednesday, December 6. The vote was overwhelmingly positive: 112 in favor, 2 op-

posed, and 3 abstentions.⁵⁸ It was an emotional moment as the affirmative votes were displayed on the electronic board at the front of the chapter hall. The enthusiastic and spontaneous applause gave testimony to the almost tangible presence of the Spirit acting in the assembly.⁵⁹

Principal Themes in the Declaration

The capitulants prepared a precis of the principal themes in the Declaration for rapid dissemination among the Brothers. With some editing, the 1967 precis can serve here by way of summary.⁶⁰ It can also show the enduring relevance of the document, 25 years after its adoption by the Chapter of the Brothers. The numbers in parenthesis refer to the paragraphs of the official text of the Declaration.

This Declaration is the response of the Brothers of the Christian Schools to the invitation of Vatican II to renew and adapt (1). Each Brother must also renew himself spiritually (3).

We do this in fidelity to the Founder's spirit, not the letter of his Rule or his writings (6-1). The Founder's genius exists today in the men who constitute his Institute (7-1).

The Chapter undertakes this renewal in full awareness of the desires of the Brothers in written notes (9), and in sensitivity to the new emphasis in the Church on the ecumenical movement (10-3) and concern for human values (10-4).

The Chapter takes the world seriously as it is (11-2,3) and hopes to offer its educational service as a remedy for the ills of the world (11-4).

The vocation of the Brother is a complex integration of an apostolic mission that stems from a religious consecration and includes community life, lay status, educational work with a preference for the poor, carried on in schools for the most part but also in other suitable educational situations (13).

Each Brother should integrate these elements personally. There is no "universal type of Brother to which all should conform" (14-3). This demands a serious period of training in religious life as well as professional competence (15).

The Brother shares many of the viewpoints and opportunities that all Christians enjoy (17). Yet, as a religious, he is distinct by reason of his special consecration, celibacy, community life, and total availability for the service of God and people (18).

Although the community life of the Brother implies certain rules and structures, these rules "are not established simply that they be kept, but their purpose is the service of persons" (19-2). The Brother finds personal fulfillment in community, aware that "the human person realizes and fulfills himself only insofar as he opens himself to others" (20-2).

The reason why the Institute exists is apostolic, that is, work for the spread of the Christian ideal in the world (22), centered on the needs of youth today who are "the hope of the Church, but also one of its major anxieties" (23-2). Religious consecration and a spirit of service work together to achieve this end; there is no reason to fear that one will lose God when he goes among young people to serve them (25-2). The community dimension of the Brother's life makes this work more effective (25-4).

The Institute rededicates itself to work for the education of the poor (28), recognizing that the various forms of poverty found in the sick, the hopeless, the abandoned and the illiterate, is often founded on social injustice (29-5). The Brothers provide a remedy by bringing education to the poor (31). Even when the Brothers teach the well-to-do, they try to educate them to social justice (32-1). All of this demands professional preparation (34).

Education is the general area in which the Brothers work (35). The need for education is generally recognized today, and there is indeed a "shortage of educators who can serve with unselfish love and genuine competence" (36-2).

Catechesis, or the teaching of religion, holds a special place (38-1). It gives the Brother a Christian outlook, not only on the next world, but on this world as well (38-2). The Brothers realize that many young people today question their faith or have none at all. This is true even in the Catholic schools (39-1). The Christian ideal must be presented in such a way as to respect freedom of conscience and not impose specific beliefs or moral practices before students are ready for them (39-2).

The emphasis on catechetics does not mean a neglect of general education, nor does it imply that other fields be used for Catholic propaganda. All teaching must be student centered (40-3) and relevant to life-situations (40-5). The Brother's concept of Christian education is broad enough to recognize that it is already Christian to bring students to appreciate freedom, truth, their own dignity as persons (41-2), the wonders of life and of nature, art, science, and technology (41-3).

The school remains central in the educational process; the Brothers have always considered the school as a privileged means of education (43). The answer to the current questioning of the Catholic school is "not to suppress the school or abandon it but to emphasize its renewal" (44-5) so that it will be capable of "preparing people for the 21st century" (44-5).

The renewal of the school demands relevance and contemporaneity in its objectives, curriculum, and methods (45-3). It must be more dynamic, more concerned with developing sensitivity and a critical mind, more reverent toward the inner realities of things (45-4), and more realistic in its sense of the modern world (45-5).

The school must seem less like an institution and more like a "living community where young people . . . educate one another by mutual understanding and respect" (46-2) with a great stress on education to personal freedom and training in responsibility (46-3). To do this, the faculty, religious and lay, must themselves be a community (46-3). The school cannot close in on itself but must be open to the larger society of the Church and the world (47). Above all, this demands a complete and professional training for the teachers (48).

The Brothers are prepared to extend their educational work beyond their own schools (50) and even to work for education outside school structures (51). New needs require new ideas and new methods, especially regarding illiteracy and similar problems (50-1). In entering new fields the Brothers would confine themselves to some form of education (52-1), and maintain ties with their community (52-2).

Significance of the Declaration

The most forceful statement on the significance of the Declaration comes from the Superior General, Brother Charles Henry, who wrote in his introduction to the official text of the document, "It is, then, in the light of the Declaration that we must read and understand the other texts of our General Chapter, including the Rule and the Constitutions. It is the basis of the doctrine that you will find in each of them. . . . The spirit of the Declaration, a spirit that is basic to the understanding of all the capitular texts, is at once a spirit of spiritual renewal and a personal, responsible engagement in the service of Christ . . ."61

The Rule and Constitutions

The history of the revision of the Rule and Constitutions⁶² prior to the second session of the 39th General Chapter has already been described. That history includes the decisions of the 1956 General Chapter, the four subsequent drafts, the formation of a capitular commission charged with the final redaction of the text, the positive and spiritual tone set by the prologue proposed during the first session in 1966, and the circulation of the fifth draft throughout the Institute during the intersession. As already noted, in the summer of 1967 a group of redactors assembled in Rome to sort out the replies.

When the Rule Commission returned for the second session in September they found the redactors already at work. Although it had been hoped that the Commission would have a draft text ready to present to the Chapter early in the second session, this proved to be impossible. The best that the Commission was able to do was to present to the general assembly on October 20, 1967, a series of 11 propositions that would serve as guidelines for the redaction of the text. The rules would be a concrete interpretation of the Gospel to aid the Brothers to achieve their mission in fidelity to the Founder. The constitutions would comprise practical and universally observable applications of the rules. The rules and constitutions would be presented together in a single volume. The Rule would be complemented by the Book of Government. The text of the Rule would be brief, theologically grounded, and spiritual in tone. Fidelity to the living spirit of the Founder would be reflected in the Rule. Some pivotal texts from the primitive Rule would be included in a separate section of the printed text. The formulation of the rules and constitutions would refer to all the Brothers, regardless of age, occupation, or nationality. All the rules and constitutions would respect persons and assist them in reaching religious maturity. By its positive appeal, the Rule would be designed to encourage the Brothers; ascetical practices would be presented in a pastoral perspective. The Rule and Constitutions would be a means to renew the Institute and to adapt it to contemporary circumstances in fidelity to the Church.⁶³

Accepting the propositions was one thing, but reducing them to an acceptable text proved to be quite another matter. In many ways, the institute-wide solicitation of responses from the Brothers and the addition of redactors only made the work of the Commission more cumbersome. The fifth draft text had failed to produce very much by way of unanimity or enthusiasm throughout the Institute during the intersession. A further difficulty was the distinction between rules and constitutions, principles as distinct from applications. It turned out in

practice that one man's principle was another's application, and vice versa. The fact that the circulated fifth draft had contained only the rules without the constitutions added to the confusion. Finally, many in the Commission were still arguing for an extremely brief and purely inspirational text modeled, for example, on the Rule of Taizé.

Before it could present a definitive text, the Rule Commission had to wait for the proposals of the other Commissions to be presented and voted by the assembled Chapter on such matters as consecration and vows, formation, community life, and religious observance. All of these topics were important and many of them were controversial. While waiting for the Chapter to act on these matters, the Rule Commission decided to solicit from its members some sample texts of a new Rule. On November 11, as the week-long presentation and discussion of the Declaration came to a close, the theologians and *periti* who had worked on the Declaration met with some members of the Rule Commission to find ways to integrate the two documents.⁶⁴ The result was a draft text of the Rule prepared by Brother Paul-Antoine Jourjon and attuned to the spirit and content of the Declaration. The acceptance of his version by the Rule Commission broke the impasse, at least for the Rule proper as distinct from the constitutions. Brother Michel Sauvage has described the work of Brother Paul Jourjon in these terms:

Brother Jourjon [is the] principal redactor of the Rule. . . . The "definitive" text presented to the Chapter and approved by it, is essentially his work, at least one could say that for the totality of the work on the Rules as such, that is the first part of each of the chapters. The Rule is truly the work of the whole Institute, of the 39th General Chapter, of the 7th Commission, of the group of "redactors." But Brother Jourjon was the guiding hand, intelligent, competent, and profoundly spiritual, without which the collective effort would not have found its direction, its vitality, or its style.⁶⁵

Immediately after the Chapter, Brother Jourjon began work on a commentary of the Rule and Constitutions, which appeared in 1969 under the title *Pour un renouveau spirituel*.⁶⁶

Contributions to the Rule from the Chapter Commissions

Beginning early in November, the various Commissions brought to the general assembly their reports and propositions for discussion and amendment. The procedure required that after the initial presentation

and discussion, the propositions would be voted either yes, no, or yes with a suggested amendment (*juxta modum*). The report would then be returned to the competent commission for revision in the light of the discussion and the oral or written suggestions. The revised proposals would then be subject to a final discussion and vote, this time either yes or no. The accepted proposals would finally be sent as appropriate either to the Rule Commission for incorporation into the Rule and Constitutions or to the Government Commission for the text of the Book of Government. In this way, each Commission had a significant contribution to make to the elaboration of what would become the normative texts for the Institute.

One aspect of the report of the Commission on Consecration was to stress religious consecration itself as more fundamental than and prior to the individual vows used to express it.⁶⁷ This would be reflected in the chapter of the Rule entitled Religious Consecration and placed before the chapters on the individual vows. The report also contained new approaches to the traditional vows of religion. Chastity was treated with a positive emphasis on universal love, service, and respect for marriage and the body. Poverty was stressed as a personal and community lifestyle of sharing according to the gospel ideal, rather than merely obtaining permission to use material goods. Obedience was looked upon as essentially a community search for the will of God.⁶⁸

There was extended discussion on the chapter floor of the commission report on the so-called special vows of gratuity and stability. Despite many notes urging that these vows be suppressed as anachronistic and unnecessary, the Commission recommended that they be retained. Since these vows have a unique significance going back to the origins of the Institute, it was suggested that the recovery of their original formulation and spirit would make them a force for renewal. So persuaded, the Chapter voted on November 25 to retain these vows, but to change their names in order to express a change of spirit.⁶⁹ In this way, the vow of teaching gratuitously became the vow of service of the poor through education, the vow of stability became the vow of fidelity.

Similar new elements were in the report from the Commission on Community Life. The emphasis that found its way into the Rule was on building community rather than on community as a given and structured reality. Community is shared and developed in relation to both the religious consecration of the Brothers and their apostolic ministry of education.⁷⁰ The proposals of the Commissions on Formation, Finance, and the Missions did not find their way into the Rule, but they were incorporated into the Book of Government or included

among the published decrees of the Chapter. The reports of these Commissions were also published separately in booklet form.⁷¹

Not all the specific proposals of the Commissions for inclusion into the Rule and Constitutions were greeted with general enthusiasm. The same controversies that had plagued the Apostolic Finality Commission in the development of the Declaration surfaced again as the various Commissions presented their reports. When, for example, on November 3, the Formation Commission, where the Spanish influence prevailed, presented its report, the French delegates challenged the report for its lack of realism, its abstract and essentialist orientation, and its failure to relate to the world of the young and to the future. The Spanish had nothing but praise for it. The report was accepted in its totality by only a narrow margin; there were many negative and qualified affirmative votes on each proposition.⁷²

Then, on November 13, the Commission on Consecration and Vows, where the French influence was strong, presented its report. This time, it was the Spanish who raised objections that there was no clear theology of religious life, that the apostolate had not been integrated with such a theology, and that there was not enough emphasis on obedience as an essential element in religious life. The viewpoint of the Commission was finally accepted, especially since it was seen to be in line with the approach of the Declaration, already well on its way to approval.⁷³ Another kind of disagreement developed when the reports of the Commission on Community touched on specific issues, especially those that involved changes from practices traditional in the Institute. Not unexpectedly, animated debates developed on questions such as the religious habit, the time to be allotted to the various religious exercises, the recitation of the rosary in community, and the suffrages for the deceased.⁷⁴

Although these theoretical and practical differences created considerable tension, solutions were found, thanks to the Rules of Procedure that provided for open discussion, oral or written suggestions for amendment, and revision of the texts by the Commissions.

Presentation and Vote on the Rule and Constitutions

With the basic text of the Rule, prepared for the most part by Brother Paul Jourjon, and the text of the Constitutions, derived from the propositions prepared by the appropriate Commissions and voted by the assembly, the Rule Commission was ready on November 28 to present the Rule and Constitutions for an orientation vote in general assembly.⁷⁵ The fact that the Declaration had meanwhile been passed

by a nearly unanimous vote, helped to create a positive attitude to the similar content and tone of the Rule. After modifying the text in accordance with the orientation vote and the amendments suggested, the Commission returned with a final draft of the Rule and Constitutions on Monday, December 11.

There were few challenges to the Commission's text. A suggestion to replace the reference to teachers in the first article of the Rule was rejected. So also was a demand to add a reference to the sixth and ninth commandments in the constitutions on chastity. With the exception of the minimum time required for spiritual reading, most of the controversy over the constitutions on the life of prayer had been resolved earlier. An attempt to eliminate all references in the constitutions to time limits on religious exercises had failed to get the necessary two-thirds vote.⁷⁶ The controversy over the obligatory rosary, the "battle of Lepanto," as it came to be called, had earlier been resolved in favor of alternate forms of devotion to Mary.⁷⁷

On Tuesday, December 12, the articles of the Rule and Constitutions were voted one by one to assure the necessary two-thirds majority. The vote went very quickly. Most were accepted unanimously or with substantial majorities. Only two failed: one on spiritual reading and one allowing communities to require additional spiritual exercises at the community level. The article on spiritual reading was reworked and voted; the other was dropped. Finally, the entire text was voted as a whole. The final vote on the Rule and Constitutions was 111 in favor and 2 opposed, almost the same as for the Declaration. There was a spontaneous burst of applause as the vote on the Rule was announced, another experience of the almost tangible presence of the Holy Spirit, completing a project that had been set in motion in 1956. According to the conditions laid down in the *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*, the Rule and Constitutions thus approved would remain in force on a provisional basis until they had been reviewed, revised, and submitted for definitive approval by the Vatican after an interval of one or possibly two General Chapters, that is, until 1976 or 1986.

One final question was to be resolved concerning the Rule and that was the matter of the prologue. It may be remembered that, during the first session of the Chapter, Brother Michel Sauvage had read a sample prologue to the Rule, addressed to the Brother in the second person singular. The text was so positive in tone, so inspirational and challenging, that it was spontaneously recognized as the paradigm for the type of Rule that would meet the expectations of the Brothers. During the second session, Brother Paul Jourjon reworked the text of the prologue to some extent, but remained committed to its eventual

inclusion.⁷⁸ As time went on, however, it became apparent that the provisional prologue had served its purpose. Many felt that its personal address and exhortative rhetoric would be at odds with the text of the Rule itself and difficult to translate from French into other languages. When the prologue was presented on December 15, the day before the session closed, it failed to get the necessary two-thirds majority. It was then voted 74 to 37 to allow regions the option of including the prologue in printed editions of the Rule as a separate sheet.⁷⁹

The English-speaking delegates were concerned to have an accurate and authentic translation of the text of the Rule and Constitutions. A first draft prepared by the two English-speaking redactors working with the Rule Commission proved to be lacking in good English idiom and in the verve and spirit of the French original. Brothers Augustine Loes and Luke Salm were then charged to edit the revised translation, based on preliminary translations of separated chapters by several of the delegates. The Superior General gave official approval to this translation before the delegates left Rome.⁸⁰ In that way, the text of the new Rule was ready for immediate distribution to the Brothers in mimeographed form well before the appearance of the printed edition.

The English edition of the Rule and Constitutions differs in some particulars from the French. The French title uses *Règles* in the plural; the English translation uses *Rule* in the singular to stress the unity of the text as a “rule of life.” In the English-language editions, the constitutions appear in a separate section distinct from the Rule proper, whereas in the French, the constitutions follow the articles of the rules in each chapter, but in an alternate typeface. The French edition has the prologue as an insert, but the prologue does not appear in most English-language editions.⁸¹

The Book of Government

The Government Commission of the Chapter had already completed a major portion of its work during the first session. The responsibilities as well as the procedures for election of the Superior General, the Vicar General, and the Brother Assistants all had to be decided before the elections could proceed. The work that remained for the second session was to determine the composition and procedures for subsequent General Chapters, and then to establish structures and offices to implement the principle of subsidiarity on the regional and district level.

On October 25 and 26, 1967, the Commission presented its proposals on the General Chapter, and the Regional and District Chapters. During the weeks that followed, as time allowed, the remaining chapters of the Book of Government were presented to the general assembly, discussed, and amended in the same manner as the Declaration and the Rule. In the very last days of the session, on December 12 and 13, the Commission presented its final version of the text. The voting went quickly, most of it by raised hands, and with very few last minute amendments.

It is historically significant that the 1967 Book of Government provided the Institute with a new philosophy of authority and government (subsidiarity), as well as structural reforms that would radically change the relationships between the Brothers and those in positions of authority. Since most of these have become part of the life of the Brothers since 1967, it seems appropriate to signal some of them here.

The Introduction, after tracing the lines of authority from God through Christ and the Church, states that the "Institute, considered in its entire body, is the depository of the authority of God in the mission that belongs to it. The General Chapter, representing all the Brothers, is the first authority in the Institute." After speaking of the role of those responsible for governing, the introduction notes, "All the Brothers, however, are truly responsible for the life of the Institute and its work. The superiors shall take note of the inspiration of the Brothers and respect the principle of subsidiarity in the exercise of their authority: each Brother and each level of government has, in its own proper domain, a certain initiative and responsibility."

Concerning the General Chapter, only the Superior Generals (present or past) and the members of the General Council would be *ex officio*; all others would be elected. To assure proportionate representation, the number of delegates would be prorated according to the population of the assistancies; the number of elected delegates for the 40th General Chapter was set at 140. The General Chapter would elect its own officers and establish its own Rules of Procedure.

All the Brother Assistants would be counselors of the Superior: some with reference to regions, others for areas of expertise. The regional Assistants would be elected by the General Chapter after presentation of three names by the delegates from the appropriate region.

Regional Conferences of Visitors are to be organized. Regional Chapters are to be held to study ways to implement the decisions of the General Chapter and again to prepare for the one to follow.

The Visitors are given more autonomy in their districts and more responsibility for renewal and growth. Two-thirds of the District Council must be elected. In addition to establishing goals for the District, the District Chapter proposes three candidates to be Visitor and elects the members of the District Council who are not *ex officio*.

In the chapter on Formation, new stress is put on fostering vocations, university study, continuing formation, the reorganization of the International Lasallian Center, and the organization of regional Lasallian Centers.

The chapter on Consecration and Vows details the conditions for making vows, the juridical requirements of the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and the provisions for separation from the Institute.

There is a totally new chapter on the Missions, providing structures for support, including the establishment of an international Missionary Secretariat.

A final chapter labeled Miscellaneous provides for alternate forms of the traditional religious habit, a revised program of suffrages for deceased Brothers, and norms for the administration of temporal goods.⁸²

Other Documents of the 39th General Chapter

Not all the resolutions passed by the Chapter found their way into the Rule and Constitutions or the Book of Government. Those that did not were published separately under the title *The Acts of the 39th General Chapter*.⁸³ Among these is a resolution requesting the Vatican to approve the Second Session of the 39th Chapter as the Special Chapter required by the decree *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. There is also the chapter decree empowering the General Council to interpret the normative texts and to modify them for grave reasons on an experimental basis until the following Chapter. *The Acts* likewise contains the capitular decrees on the lay character of the Institute; coeducation; the International Lasallian Center (CIL); religious names (no longer official); the Missionary Secretariat; finances; and the principles to govern the writing of the Rule and Constitutions. These decrees are followed

by guidelines derived from the commission reports on Vocations, the Life of Prayer, the Life of Faith, Finance, and the Missions. In addition, the Chapter urged the publication of the full reports of the Commissions on Consecration and Vows, Formation, Community Life, and the Missions.⁸⁴

Right up to the very end, some delegates were maintaining that the 1947 Rule was still in force in those matters that the Chapter had not changed. For that reason, at one of the final sessions the following resolution was presented and passed:

In the Circular which promulgates the decisions of the Chapter, the Brother Superior will clearly indicate that the texts *The Rule and the Constitutions* and *The Book of Government* accepted by the special General Chapter of 1966–1967 replace in their entirety and until the next General Chapter, whether ordinary or extraordinary, the texts published in 1947 under the title *Common Rules and Constitutions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools* and *The Rule of Government of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*.⁸⁵

Conclusion

The theme of replacement is a good way to conclude this account of the events, the issues, the conflicts, the people, and the achievements of the 39th General Chapter of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, formally recognized by church authority as the obligatory Special Chapter to implement the adaptation and renewal mandated by Vatican II.

For some, the very thought of replacement connotes repudiation of tradition. That is not true in this case. In the documents of the 39th General Chapter, the purpose of the Institute remains what it always was ever since the days of the Founder, namely the ministry of Christian education, primarily through the schools, and with a preference for the poor. Above all, the spirit of the Institute remains the spirit of faith, expressed in an ardent zeal for the salvation of young people. In the spirit of the Founder, the chapter documents challenge the Brothers to see the action of God in the present day and to fathom what God is revealing in today's world through the experience of persons and events. Finally, the lifestyle of the Brothers remains rooted in the spirit and practice of community life. The documents challenge the Brothers to integrate the essential elements of their vocation, religious

consecration, apostolic mission, and community life, so that together they build apostolic communities of consecrated men.

Nevertheless, replacement involves change. In the course of the 39th General Chapter, the Institute undertook a fundamental reorientation of its manner of living the Gospel, more suited, perhaps, both to the contemporary world and to the original vision of the Founder than to some of the accretions in the centuries between. After 1967, the Institute was less monastic and more apostolic in its spirituality; less static and fixed in a certain way of doing things and more dynamic and open to new possibilities as they arise; less focused on institutional structures and more concerned with persons; less enclosed on itself and more open to the Church and to the world; less dominated by one national culture and language, more truly an international force at home everywhere in the world.⁸⁶

Such was the enthusiasm, the promise, and the sense of balance on the part of the delegates as they participated on Saturday, December 16, 1967 in the solemn ceremonies that brought the Chapter to its official close. One by one, or in groups, they returned to the Brothers who had elected them, armed with precious and challenging documents, filled with good tidings of great joy. As the saying goes, the rest is history, a history that must be told in the narrative to follow.

Notes

1. Circular letter dated June 7, 1967 and signed by the Superior General. Copy in ANYD.

2. One American custom that the US delegates had imported somewhat surreptitiously into the first session was the occasional gathering variously known as the "social," "wackles," or "pre- or post-prandials." In any case, the low price of untaxed spirits in Italy encouraged this form of much-needed relaxation. As time went on, the "Yanks" began to share the benefits with other delegates, notably the Canadians. On one occasion, in an attempt to build bridges with the French, a carefully selected group was invited to join. One of them filled a tumbler with Scotch whiskey as if it were wine. After one healthy gulp, he exclaimed, "*Très fort!*"

The element of deprivation and austerity in these gatherings was the scarcity of ice. Now, at the beginning of the second session, with a changed atmosphere and new physical amenities, it seemed appropriate for the Americans to contribute to the purchase of a small refrigerator. The purchase was arranged by the author with the help of the late Brother Thomas Matthews, then Visitor of Saint Louis and fellow member of the Finality Commission. That refrigerator subsequently served many American groups in various locations in the motherhouse, at the Lasallianum, the CIL, and subsequent Chapters.

3. Bulletin of the 39th Chapter: Second Session (henceforth BSS), No. 4, October 3, 1967. The preparation of the English-language press releases (including the Bulletin) had been entrusted for the second session to Brother Joel Damian. When he was seated as the delegate from Saint Louis to replace Brother I. Philip, Brother Philip Nelan was admitted to the press bureau of the Chapter in his place. BSS, No. 5, p. 5.

4. The author notes in his diary: ["Homilist stresses twice daily mental prayer as our great contribution to the life of the Church. [Assistant] Leo's comment: They drew the first blood!" The entry continues: "Extravagant but disorganized buffet gives quite a different mood to the opening as compared to last year." Ms. in ANYD.

5. The full text of the formal declaration is found in Circular 391, p.12. The Institute circulars from this point on were produced in a new format, with the number on the title page but not on the cover.

6. For those not familiar with the old system, Brothers from New York and New Orleans and Santa Fe all had the first of their two religious names beginning with A, B, or C; Baltimore had D, E, F, and G; Saint Louis had H, I, J, K, and L; San Francisco had all the letters from R to the end of the alphabet. The Districts of LI-NE, Winona, MN, and Central States were formed after the system was abandoned. For a fuller discussion and some typical examples, see the chapter entitled "What's in a Name?" in Luke Salm, FSC, *Brother Scubillon Rousseau, FSC*, (Romeoville: Christian Brothers, 1986).

7. Minutes of meeting of October 1, 1967 at 8:45 a.m. DOC. 932.0. During the second session, all the documents were numbered to indicate by the initial number the Commission from which the document originated. Documents from the Central Commission begin with the number 9. Henceforth the official minutes will be cited by the document (DOC.) number only.

8. Some of the Americans felt betrayed by Brothers Quinn and Salm, who sensed that the assembly was opposed to the proposal and becoming impatient with the prolonged debate. The author notes in his diary: "Finally D. John agrees to second a withdraw. I make it. Saturnino puts in his oar closing debate. Overwhelming vote and everybody happy to be rid of it except Leo, Gabe, Gus and Carey." Ms. in ANYD.

9. The minutes show 80 votes for Brother Wilfrid with 17 for Elrick Paul, his nearest competitor, 13 for Marie-Roland of Quebec, and 7 for Brother Vincentius from Holland. DOC. 932.1, page 2.

10. A complete listing of the membership and officers of the Chapter's Commissions is given in Circular 391, pp. 17-21.

11. The vote was 64 in favor, 47 against, and 5 abstentions. DOC. 932.2. The opposition centered on the replacement of all the traditional vocal prayers by the Church's Office, suppression of the community recitation of the rosary, and the recitation of night prayer or Compline in private. The close vote was an indication that some of the more conservative forces were beginning to group together and make their influence felt on issues relating to traditional Institute practices of piety.

12. Circular 390, p 5.

13. There is a copy of the French text of both conferences by Monsignor Moeller in ANYD. BSS No. 6 reports these conferences, out of sequence. The report identifies the English-speaking delegates who asked questions: the Superior on whether the Brothers should concentrate on schools or social work, Brothers Gabriel Costello on premature confidence in human progress,

Luke Salm on continuity between the natural and supernatural, and Joseph McNally on the whole world as missionary territory.

14. BSS No. 5, p. 3.

15. The author notes in his diary for October 5: "The AM session was all Gabe Moran's and he was sensational both in presentation and in the question period." Ms. in ANYD.

16. BSS No. 5, p. 4.

17. Ibid. The Bulletin devotes three full pages to a summary of Moran's two presentations with a rather full report of the discussion sessions that followed. A complete text of Moran's second talk entitled *Religious Education Today* is in ANYD.

18. BSS No. 6 devotes most of pages 2 and 3 to a summary of the talks and the discussion. A copy of the text of both talks is in ANYD.

19. BSS No. 7, p. 2. The style of presentation did not sit too well with some of the "Anglophones" and "Francophones." This may have been due to unfamiliarity with the language, rhetoric, and cultural background of the speaker. The author notes in his diary one such comment: "*Un déluge des mots, un désert des idées.*" Ms. in ANYD.

20. See the citations from the BSS, above.

21. Circular 391, p. 24. This account fails to mention several important details. The "Tribune of Postulation," where the Superior was to be seated with all the members of the General Chapter, proved to be much too small and the long benches provided seating for only the most distinguished and the most elderly in the group. The rest had to stand through the long wait before the ceremony began as well as during the ceremony itself. After a delay of more than an hour beyond the scheduled starting time, an announcement was finally made that Pope Paul VI was too ill to appear at the ceremony and that the decree of canonization and the homily would be read by Archbishop Benelli, afterwards Cardinal but then the acting Secretary of State, whose grim visage hardly added to the joy of the occasion. The music was provided by a choir, which minimized congregational participation in the chants of the liturgy. After the ceremony, the sky clouded up and it rained intermittently throughout the day. The motherhouse was inadequate to accommodate the number of Brothers from all over the world who came to Rome for the celebration. Between rain showers, the Superior received some of the larger delegations in the outdoor stadium of the Brothers' school next door. The buffet that evening in the motherhouse dining room, supposedly reserved to visitors from overseas, was overcrowded and poorly organized. As one of the delegates remarked, "It is almost as if Benilde didn't want to be canonized." See the account in the author's diary, ms. in ANYD.

The canonization, including the complete text of the homily prepared by the pope, was reported in *Osservatore Romano* on the following day. A copy of that edition is in ANYD.

22. This hymn had been introduced earlier by the author as part of the celebration of the nameday of the Superior on November 4, feast of Saint Charles.

23. The author was the elected representative to the Central Commission.

24. See "*La finalité de l'Institut selon Saint Jean-Baptiste de La Salle,*" in *Lasallianum* (October 2, 1965). It was translated into English, served as the point of departure for the paper on finality prepared by the faculty of the

Washington scholasticate, and was eventually published in English in *Points of View*.

25. An extensive agenda of seven pages was circulated in advance by Brother Michel Sauvage under the title *Pour une épine dorsale*. Copy sent to the author in ANYD.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

27. Minutes of the *2e Commission Capitulaire Sous-commission européenne*, otherwise untitled. Copy in ANYD. Although the meeting was intended for all the European members of the Commission, the minutes indicate that only Brothers from France actually attended. Brothers Saturnino from Spain and Mutien from Belgium are listed in the minutes as *excusés*.

28. A summary of the work at Perpignan and Guidel is provided in a document entitled *Contribution à la préparation du rapport de la commission sur la finalité*. This text, emanating from the European sub-commission of the Apostolic Finality Commission, served as minutes for the two meetings. Copy in ANYD.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Cited in the previous chapter.

31. *Intersession*, pp. 115–129.

32. Cited in the previous chapter.

33. The only source for information on this meeting available to the author is a notice in the minutes of the Montreal meeting, cited below, which goes on to state that “due to a lack of time, the results of the work at Salamanca could not be included in the booklet *Intersession*.” Copy in ANYD.

34. Again, the source is the set of very detailed minutes of the Montreal meeting, cited below, prepared by Brother Michel Sauvage. Copy in ANYD.

35. *Réunion de la sous-commission (américaine) de la 2e commission*, a detailed report of 28 single-spaced typed pages prepared by Michel Sauvage giving an almost verbatim account of the discussion held in Montreal for five full days from July 26 until the afternoon of July 30, 1967. Copy in ANYD.

36. The working copy of the draft (DOC. 2.8.1.) that was used and annotated by the author during the discussions can be found in ANYD.

37. The author notes in his diary under date of Wednesday, September 20, “Spanish are constantly pushing for a more logical and ontological presentation. F. Saturnino is always suggesting little amendments to tone down the existential and dynamic elements.” Ms. in ANYD.

38. *Les capitulants de l'Assistance d'Espagne parlant sur la Déclaration capitulaire au sujet du Frère dans le monde d'aujourd'hui*. The ms. copy in ANYD bears the note in the handwriting of the author: “Distributed to all capitulants 10/7/67.”

39. *Ibid.* The author notes in his diary for September 20: “In PM the issue is joined on the essential elements. Saturnino presents an alternate, more Denzinger-like analysis. Compromise rephrasing of first paragraph to follow the vow formula. Final redaction of M. Sauvage wins most.” If the author's memory serves, the Spanish draft found little support and never became the basic text for discussion in the Commission.

40. See the author's diary for September 21, Ms. in ANYD.

41. *Aux présidents et membres des Huit Commissions réunis à la Maison Générale du 15 au 30 septembre*. Doc. 2.8.2. The statement concludes with this note (in translation): “The members of the 2d commission are sure that this clarification will suffice to dissipate all misconceptions and permit the commission to continue, with the serenity it needs, the work of preparing a

text of the Declaration, which the Chapter will then have to judge." Copy in ANYD.

42. The author notes in his diary for September 23: "All day on religious consecration. My role seemed to be to keep the work moving between two poles of Michel and Saturnino. The basic text lacks much of the riches of US declaration and Montreal redaction of the propositions in *Intersession*. Final outline seems agreeable to all—[I] agree to rewrite using US, *Intersession*, in 2 main parts—what religious consecration is and its relation to apostolate." Ms. in ANYD.

43. This chapter of the Declaration, as can be seen from the citation in the margin, is the basis for article 10 of the definitive Rule of 1987.

44. The working copy used and annotated by the author during the discussions (DOC. 2.8.1.2.) can be found in ANYD.

45. The working copy used by the author shows, even at this late stage, deletions of entire paragraphs to keep the text as terse and emphatic as possible. DOC. 2.8.4, copy in ANYD.

46. The author notes in his diary for October 28 (Monday): "Commission work all day, which turns out to be rather light. Cleaning up operation. Begin with report. Problem of propositions and procedure arises. Subcommittee of M. Sauvage, Saturnino, and myself works to clarify both at 5:00 p.m."

47. The author notes in his diary for October 23: "Declaration finally appears and is distributed. Romaric to M. Sauvage: The baby is born, now it has to be baptized. M.S[auvage]: OK, so long as it isn't circumcised." Ms. in ANYD.

48. *Présentation de la Déclaration sur les Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes dans le monde d'aujourd'hui*. (DOC. 2.8.2.3.) Copy in ANYD, together with a working copy of the earlier version (DOC. 2.8.2.) annotated by the author during the discussion in commission.

49. The author notes in his diary for November 7: ". . . some . . . don't like the way the Big 4 speak for the Commission. Remark of Gabe Costello: 'Who's going to get up and argue with the Holy Trinity?'" Ms. in ANYD.

50. The vote was 111 in favor, 4 against, and 6 abstentions. DOC. 932.31. This was very close to what the eventual definitive vote would be a month later.

51. The author simply notes in his diary for November 7: "Good vote on [Chapter] 5." Ms. in ANYD. The minutes record the vote as 63 yes, 52 yes *juxta modum* (henceforth yes-jm), and 1 no. DOC. 932.32, copy in ANYD. There had been so much preliminary discussion and debate that little was left to add except the amendments still to be considered.

52. The author notes in his diary for November 8: "The Declaration continues. I had thought we might finish 3 chapters today, but M. Sauvage got up and said he thought Chapter 6 on the poor was the essential chapter. Thereupon there was unloosed a long string of speeches: we're being unrealistic and dishonest; it is communistic and materialistic in tone and not evangelical; the poor are too narrowly defined; it isn't logical etc. We finally came back and by the end of the day the chapter was voted in." Ms. in ANYD. The minutes show that the vote was 48 yes, 60 yes-jm, 2 no. DOC. 932.34, copy in ANYD.

53. For vague diary entry, see following note. The minutes show that the vote on Chapter VII was 68 yes, 47 yes-jm; and 1 no. DOC. 932.35, copy in ANYD.

54. The author notes in his diary for Friday, November 10: "All day on the Declaration. AM session on Education gets all bogged down on Spanish speeches re. spiritual direction. . . . Then 11:00 session got hooked on Jerome's question to clarify the idea of the community as a prisoner of the institution. French went crazy, demanded a vote. Vince Ayel explained it twice and Saturnino once—finally sent to Commission. 3:30 meeting all charged up with M. Sauvage going back into the notes. At 5:00 p.m. session, after a brief balk . . . on beyond-school activities, [Chapter] #8 was finally voted." Ms. in ANYD. The minutes show that the vote was 58 yes, 51 yes-jm, 5 no. DOC. 932.37, copy in ANYD.

55. These chapters passed through quickly. The author notes in his diary for Saturday, November 11: "AM session wrapped up the Declaration in short order and without much objection." Ms. in ANYD. The minutes show the following votes: Chapter I on renewal and the Founder had 82 yes, 36 yes-jm; Chapter II on the signs of the times had 79 yes, 39 yes-jm, 1 no; Chapter IV on the personal synthesis had 86 yes, 29 yes-jm, and 2 no. All three chapters were discussed and voted during the first meeting of the day, lasting an hour and a half. DOC. 932.38, copy in ANYD.

56. Minutes of December 5 at 9:00 a.m. DOC. 932.81, copy in ANYD.

57. Copies in ANYD. The author's copy of the final text in ANYD has on the cover the signatures of all the members of the Commission.

58. Minutes of December 6 at 9:00 a.m. DOC. 932.83, copy in ANYD.

59. Brother Augustine Loes, after reading this sentence, wrote in the margin: "That's exactly how I felt."

60. Original text of the paraphrase is in ANYD.

61. The English text of the Foreword can be found in the unnumbered pages of the Declaration prepared by Saint Mary's Press and distributed through the Christian Brothers Conference at Lockport IL in 1968.

62. The term "The Rule and Constitutions," or simply "The Rule," will be used here to refer to the document of that title. (The French original which it translates has *Règles* in the plural.) The terms "rules" and "constitutions" will be used when referring to the individual articles.

63. After some discussion over the wording, all 11 propositions were voted by a large majority. The text of the propositions is in Doc. 7.7.003-1. Copy in ANYD with annotations by the author indicating the vote on each proposition.

64. No official record of this meeting exists, but there is an explicit reference to some of the problems and personalities in the author's diary of that date.

65. In a document entitled *Note au sujet du Prologue de la Règle* written by Brother Michel Sauvage in response to an inquiry from Brother Louis Milane. The author has a copy.

66. The work of 400 pages has the sub-title *Commentaire des Règles et Constitutions des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes établies au 39e Chapitre général 1966-1967*. There is no date or place of publication on the title page, but the introductory letter of Brother Charles Henry is dated Rome, March 7, 1969.

67. This point is developed at some length in the commission report. See "Religious Consecration and Vows," Chapter V of the booklet entitled *Religious Consecration*, which is in effect an English translation of the commission report published in 1968 with the other chapter documents by the Christian Brothers Conference.

68. See the relevant chapters of the 1967 Rule and the corresponding booklets, which are translations of the commission report on the individual vows.

69. The proposal to renew the vow of stability with an emphasis on fidelity passed 85 to 16; to change the name of the vow of gratuity, 81 to 22; to change the name of stability, 74 to 32. There were also a few votes on each proposal *juxta modum* (10, 7, and 2 respectively). DOC. 932.60, copy in ANYD.

70. See the relevant chapter in the Rule and the document of the Commission published in English under the title *Community Life*.

71. All part of the boxed set of chapter documents published in English by the Christian Brothers Conference. English translations of the chapter documents were also published in a similar format out of centers in England and Asia, as also in other languages, especially French and Spanish.

72. The account here is almost verbatim from the author's diary for Friday, November 3, which begins with the remark that the "French break out in a series of interventions beating the devil out of the report . . ." The details of the discussion, which lasted over two full days are fairly well summarized in the official minutes for November 3 and 4, DOCS. 932.22-26. Copies in ANYD.

73. The author notes in his diary for Monday, November 13, "First Commission presents its excellent report. After an hour of glowing praise [in support of the document], [a Spanish delegate] goes back at it again on 3 counts: 1) religious life treated with indifference, 2) no integration, 3) no obedience. Session break gave expression to widespread concern re. division into camps. At 5:00 p.m. session, many disagreed [with the Spanish], notably Paul-Antoine, and the 'opposition' seemed to collapse." Ms. in ANYD. The official minutes of the two sessions of November 13 summarize the various interventions in some detail. DOCS. 932-41 and 42, copies in ANYD.

74. The author notes in his diary for Monday, November 27, "Evening session develops emotional outbursts on 4th Commission suggestion for two hours a week spiritual reading"; and for November 28, "Begin the nitty-gritty stuff of exercises: doctrinal, biblical, and liturgical renewal goes fast. Then all hell breaks loose re. the vocal prayers and rosary, necessitating a night session." Ms. in ANYD.

75. The minutes summarize the discussion and give the vote on each article. DOCS. 932.66 to 70, copies in ANYD.

76. This motion was proposed by Brother Augustine Loes, who foresaw the difficulty of enforcing the constitutions requiring morning mental prayer and evening prayer for half an hour each, specified time frame for spiritual reading, etc. The motion won a majority vote but failed to get the necessary two-thirds. This is based on the recollection of the author, who has been unable to find a reference to it in the minutes. It seems that some of the secretaries did not record motions that failed.

77. The compromise proposal had been made originally by Brother Erminus Joseph, who was deeply respected by the older delegates and officials, but who also strongly supported the American attempts to rid the Rule of unenforceable legalisms. Brother Joseph's proposal was modified somewhat by a Spanish delegate before being passed in connection with the fourth Commission's report and incorporated into the Constitutions. The author notes in his diary for Sunday, December 3, "Consternation in the American camp at

the success of the Old Vets and Spanish to win, partly, the battle of Lepanto as we have called it." Ms. in ANYD.

78. See the *Note au sujet du prologue*, cited above in note 65.

79. French text with annotation of the vote in the handwriting of the author in ANYD.

80. The text is on page iv of the published version *The Rule and the Constitutions* printed by Saint Mary's Press sometime in 1968 and distributed by the Christian Brothers Conference in Lockport, IL. The Asian Assistant prepared a more literal translation from the French for his constituents.

81. It must also be admitted that the English translation sometimes takes liberties with the French original, as would be discovered some years later, especially with regard to the formula for vows. Thus where a literal translation would read "I promise to unite myself and to remain in Society with the Brothers . . . ," the translation reads, "I promise to unite myself and to live in community with the Brothers. . . ." This is simply a mistranslation. Again, where the French describes the Brothers as associated together "to conduct schools for the educational service of the poor," the English has them associated "to engage in educational work for the service of the poor." This conscious adaptation would become an issue in the 1986 Chapter, where an attempt in the Draft Rule to bring the French text into line with the broader English version failed to gain support.

82. See *The Book of Government*, part of the boxed set of documents of the 39th General Chapter in English printed by Saint Mary's Press in 1968 and circulated by the Christian Brothers Conference in Lockport, IL.

83. Also in the boxed set of chapter documents in English.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *The Acts of the 39th General Chapter*, paragraph 3.

86. This sentence is in outline the substance of the presentations given by the author to groups of Brothers in various centers in the United States.

6

The Intercapitular Period (1967-1976)

The Impact of the 39th General Chapter

The delegates to the 39th General Chapter returned to their Districts, happy to join with their Brothers in the celebration of Christmas and the New Year of Our Lord, 1968. Now the ex-delegates had to face the problems of re-entry into the real world of the *terribile quotidianum*. Almost all of them were administrators of one kind or another, most as Visitors of Districts with all the personal, financial, and organizational concerns that had accumulated during their long absence. To this burden was added the responsibility to communicate to the Brothers the decisions, the thrust, and the tone of the Chapter and to interpret its significance for the future of the Institute.

This double responsibility, managing the routine while transmitting the message that an extraordinary event in the life of the Institute had taken place, led inevitably to varied results. In some places, the urgency of deferred decisions on routine matters put the experience of the Chapter into the background. The delegates who did try to convey some of the excitement and achievement of the Chapter tended to be selective, relying on memory or personal bias while awaiting the translation and publication of the chapter documents. The Brothers generally, who over the years had been led not to expect very much that was substantive from the General Chapters, were not prepared to absorb the vision, the scope, or the delicate balance between tradition and novelty in the decisions of this most recent Chapter.

It was not long, however, before the Brothers began to realize that in some sense every aspect of their lives had been called into question by the events of Vatican II and the General Chapter. Whereas the delegates had experienced the transition gradually over the course of the almost two years the Chapter was in session, there was not much preparation at the grass roots for the radical nature of the change. The rigid and detailed Rule had been replaced by an inspirational Rule and a series of specific "constitutions," with the distinction between the rules and constitutions in terms of their binding force not altogether clear. The highly centralized governmental structures that had enforced a uniform lifestyle worldwide had been replaced by structures intended to give more autonomy and responsibility to the Brothers themselves on the local level. The apostolic opportunities

that had been limited to schools conducted by the Brothers were now extended to other forms and other centers in the educational apostolate.

The radical character of the transition initiated by the Chapter did not become apparent all at once. The tendency at first, at least in the United States, was to reassure the Brothers, insisting that nothing fundamental had been changed; all that was necessary was to concentrate on the new responsibility given to the local Chapters and administrators. Out of this approach, there developed extensive discussion about the obligatory character of the new constitutions, the possibilities and limitations for experimentation, the legislative authority of the newly created representative Chapters, and the manner of enforcing their decrees. The Rule, being nonspecific, was easily admired and just as easily ignored. With a new set of structures replacing the old, the question was how to deal with them under the rubric of subsidiarity. The ensuing discussions could become very passionate on topics that had become debatable for the first time, such as the use of money, travel, the prayer schedule, and religious dress.

A notable example of the attempt to adjust to the transition was the first Chapter of the United States Region held at Lockport, Illinois, in July 1968. The resolutions, most of them passed by near-unanimity, reflect a demand for more regional and local autonomy, further experimentation in prayer and liturgy, greater personal preference in apostolic work, and greater flexibility in the procedures for making vows and the interpretation of their obligations.¹ What the resolutions do not convey are the strongly divided opinions expressed during the course of the Regional Chapter, and afterwards among the Brothers in their communities, on issues such as secularization, subsidiarity, the legitimacy of experimentation, and the authority of the Regional Chapter itself.

This attempt to adapt to change by concentrating on the practical and legal niceties tended to obscure the broader nature of the process of adaptation and renewal that the 39th General Chapter had set in motion. In its conscious attempt to recapture the charism and the originality of the Founder's vision, the Chapter had effectively turned its back on the way the Institute had imaged itself in the recent past. The chapter documents describe an Institute no longer closed in on itself but open to the whole Christian community and to the world, its spirit charged with a dynamic apostolic vision, its spirituality rooted in the Gospel rather than law. From this perspective, the Declaration and the Rule rather than the Constitutions or the Book of Government provided the key to interpret the achievement of the Chapter.² As with the documents of Vatican II, it might be said, according to this view, that

what had started as an *aggiornamento*, a process of evolution, had in reality initiated something of a revolution instead.³

One of those who saw the radical nature of the change most clearly was Brother Charles Henry, the Superior General. In his official communications, he tried to point to the Declaration and the Rule as the basis for everything else that the Chapter had decided.⁴ Beyond that, he was aware of the theological climate in the post-Vatican II Church as the context for the transition which the Institute was experiencing. In the first postcapitular sessions of the renewed Second Novitiate, the *Centre International Lasallien* (CIL), designed for Brothers in charge of formation centers, the Superior tried to open to the participants some of the developments in contemporary theology that he considered significant for the future of religious life. Unfortunately, in his analysis he employed some of the more startling and innovative terminology of the theologians, his conferences were poorly and unsympathetically translated, and bootleg copies were made. The resultant controversy led to challenges to his leadership from certain sectors of the Institute and problems with the Vatican authorities.⁵

Despite what must have been a traumatic experience, Brother Charles continued to urge the Brothers to accept in faith the reality of change. In this context, it is worth quoting one of his typically balanced, yet forceful statements.

A subject that has importance for our growth in faith, for our development of authentic community, and for a vital renewal and adaptation of our educational apostolate, is change. This is a subject that inspires fear in the hearts of many Brothers, while it arouses enthusiasm in the hearts of many others. Faith is needed to surmount that fear, as it is needed to regulate that enthusiasm. We are meant to be a dynamic Institute, and an inescapable aspect of dynamism is change, adaptation to the constantly evolving world. Dynamism requires that we be willing to see disappear what is no longer relevant, that we embrace with discernment that which is willed by God for the world that is being born. To live meaningfully our apostolate today, to respond with meaning to the needs of the world today, we must live in this day, not in the dreams of the past or in reveries of what used to be; we must suffer the agony of change, the agony of a new birth.⁶

The reaction of the Brothers to all of this was as varied as their proximity to or distance from the events and their involvement in the process of change. The tendency of some was to go on as usual with their traditional piety, life, and work, albeit profiting from many of the

mitigations that the Chapter had introduced. A fair number, especially among the younger Brothers and those in the more progressive centers of formation, interpreted the principle of subsidiarity to mean that each Brother was free “to do his own thing,” to seek personal fulfillment in a lifestyle, a community, and an apostolic work largely determined by his own choice. But there were many Brothers who saw in the Declaration, the new Rule, and the more open structures fresh opportunities and exciting challenges, solidly based on gospel values and the vision of the Founder, to create a revitalized Institute responsive to the signs of the times and the needs of the Church and the world.

The International Visitors’ Meeting 1971

As provided by the General Chapter, in 1971 the Brother Visitors from around the world were summoned to Rome to review the impact of the previous Chapter, to address immediate problems, and to look ahead toward the 40th General Chapter scheduled for 1976.⁷ This was a unique opportunity to assess the way in which the Institute worldwide was making its way through the difficult period of transition set in motion by the decisions of 1966–1967. Some indication of the organization of the meeting and the content of the discussions can be gathered from the following letter written by the Visitor of New York to an American confrere one week after the opening of the meeting.

It is clear now that we are not here for debate and voting on propositions (as at the General Chapter), but only for the sharing of experiences and ideas about our life. We are headed, I think, for the kind of experience of pluralism and brotherhood that I had hoped we would have. The division into linguistic groups (English, French, and Spanish) has made for much freer sharing of thought than was possible at the Chapter, when all committee work was done in French. This has resulted in the surfacing of quite different approaches to our lives as Brothers. Our first week of work was on the first topic of Charles Henry’s special circular for the meeting—the Religious life in general. Next week will be on Community Life and Formation. The following week on the Apostolate. Each language group is expected to present a report on its discussion at the general assembly. . . . These reports are not intended for general circulation. They are intended for study by the Superior and his Council and a synthesis and condensation before being circulated to all the Institute.⁸

The published report of the meeting provides a summary of the discussions, divided into chapters on the identity of the Brother, formation, Christian education (including the schools, catechesis, and the service of the poor), and government of the Institute.⁹ All these topics had been dealt with in the documents of the 39th General Chapter, but now the Superior and his Council, in dialogue with the Visitors, had to test the Chapter's vision against the concrete experience of the five-year period.¹⁰

The Identity of the Brother

Although the 1967 Declaration was intended as a statement on the identity of the Brother in the contemporary world, the Visitors felt that the search for personal and corporate identity was still a matter of concern to many Brothers. There seemed to be a crisis of meaning in relation to the relevance of the Church in a secularized and technological world. The Brother has to find his identity in the midst of changes and shifting values in relation to community life, consecration, prayer, and religious education. The response of the Visitors was a call for renewal on every level: for the individual Brother to renew his sense of vocation and mission; for the Districts to prepare leaders and to stimulate the communities to renewal; for the General Council at the center of the Institute to initiate specific studies to deal with urgent problems, to be perceived as more pastoral than juridical, and to coordinate and assist the Chapters at various levels to be of greater pastoral service to the Brothers.¹¹

Prayer

The Visitors in 1971 made yet another attempt to resolve the controversies surrounding the obligation of the Constitutions concerning the life of prayer. It may be recalled that the articles requiring specific minimum times for certain religious exercises had been hotly disputed in 1967 at the Chapter and finally resolved by compromise formulations.¹² In December 1969 the Superior had already addressed this issue, writing in part:

Let me urge all our Brothers to ponder the principles of the *Rule* on prayer in order to understand the meaning of the *Constitutions* on prayer, and not allow themselves to be bogged down in a mire of prayerlessness, either by a sense of legalism or a spirit of opposition, both of which choke off the life of prayer in the individual and the community.¹³

At the request of the Visitors, apparently to satisfy the legalists unable to accept the Superior's Circular as a sufficiently "authentic" interpretation, the General Council undertook to study the matter further. Its conclusions, together with some practical reflections, were subsequently published in Circular 395 devoted to the subject of prayer.¹⁴ What impact such solemn documents would have on the prayer life of the Brothers and the communities remained problematic. A long time would be needed before the almost total collapse of the old prayer system resulted in an identifiable movement within the Institute, as well as in religious institutes generally, to develop suitable and lasting patterns of personal and community prayer.

Formation

Only two years after the close of the 39th General Chapter the transition from a rigid and uniform system of formation for religious life was given new impetus with the publication by the Vatican Congregation for Religious of the postconciliar instruction *Renovationis causam*. This document opened up to religious institutes the possibility of substituting promises or other forms of commitment in place of temporary vows, relaxed the strict enclosure and other requirements for a valid novitiate, and gave more power to the institutes themselves to determine ways of adapting the formation process. The General Council of the Institute, after intense study in committee and discussion in the Council,¹⁵ directed a Circular to the entire Institute indicating the options available to the Brothers in charge for the various stages of initial formation.¹⁶ Effectively it gave to regions and Districts the power to determine whether other forms of commitment (usually referred to as "promises") could replace temporary vows. Where Districts decided not to allow the option as a policy, Brothers could apply on an individual basis.¹⁷

Although the intent of the instruction was to further the cause of renewal (the meaning of *renovationis causam*), the confusion and conflict generated over the distinction between vows and promises, and the consequent unraveling of traditional approaches to formation, only served to make the transition to a renewed Institute more difficult. It is not surprising, then, that formation in its various stages formed a major part of the agenda at the 1971 meeting of the Visitors. The Circular summarizes the discussions under these headings: Principles of Change and Development, Apostolate of Vocations, Constitutive Elements of Formation, Stages of Formation, Novitiate in Community, Vows and Promises, Problem of Definitive Commitment, Professional Studies, Continuing Formation, and the International Lasallian Center.¹⁸

Many of these same topics had already been dealt with at the 1967 Chapter. But all of them took on a new dimension from questions relating to the vows. Not only had the Vatican Congregation offered an alternative to temporary vows, but the Brothers in formation themselves were beginning to challenge the requirement of perpetual vows. In view of multiplying requests for dispensations from final vows, even from some of the most venerated senior Brothers, it is no wonder that pronouncing final vows was losing much of its significance. The juridical procedures for making and dispensing vows were perceived as increasingly at odds with the values of commitment and fidelity that the structures were intended to realize. These issues seemed to the Visitors sufficiently urgent for them to recommend that the General Council establish a research committee under the direction of the Brother Assistant for Formation to study the questions in some depth.

Christian Education: the School, Catechesis, the Poor

In turning to the problems of providing a Christian Education in the modern world, the Visitors called once again, as had the Declaration, for the renewal of the school and the transformation of the educational world in the light of gospel values. Again, the emphasis was on competence, creativity, and willingness to change. The Circular notes that Districts might study alternatives to the school as an expression of greater openness to the many opportunities for service within the field of education.¹⁹

Special attention was given to the area of catechetics. The Circular notes: "One of the essential characteristics of this Lasallian school is its catechetical mission, which is not only to be equated with oral instruction, but with the more powerful instruction of our evangelical lives, a convincing argument for the doctrine that we teach."²⁰ As a practical follow-up, the Visitors urged the General Council to create under the presidency of the Assistant for Formation an international commission on catechetics.²¹

Much attention was also given to questions related to the service of the poor. In a particularly moving intervention, Brother Noé Zevallos, Visitor of Peru, declared that "the time has come for the Institute . . . to put aside positions that are consoling and not at all committed and to express itself once and for all in a coherent and radical way in favor of the poor." He described the theology emerging in Latin America as "the formative factor of a pedagogy of liberation which will permit the forming of a new type of man, truly human, who has a sense of community and who is a giving man, one who will avoid converting the oppressed into oppressor; this man does not seek to *have*

more but to *be* more.”²² Similarly, Brother Avelino Fernandez, Visitor of Antilles, intervened: “My Brothers know that they must share with the Latin American man the days of suffering and persecution which are the fruits of institutionalized violence: this response to the Church and to the Institute is for my Brothers and myself . . . the motivation profoundly felt for the creation of authentic Lasallian communities.”²³ It seems, however, that not all the Visitors at the meeting were quite so unequivocal on service of the poor and oppressed.²⁴ Even so, the Circular devotes four pages to urging the Brothers to be sensitive to the needs of the poor and to work for the social formation of youth.²⁵

Government and Subsidiarity

By the time the Visitors assembled in Rome, the Institute everywhere was experiencing the effects, good and bad, of the revolutionary decision of the 39th General Chapter to adopt the principle of subsidiarity and to decentralize the structures of government. On the one hand, the Visitors expressed fear that the loss of uniformity might threaten the sense of unity in the Institute. But on the other hand, it was becoming ever more clear that the one bond of unity holding the Institute together was the vision of the Founder and his charism living in the Brothers, “making us more sensitive to the needs and the challenges of our time and place.”²⁶ The Visitors expressed the hope that the General Council might be the visible symbol of that unity. In the report, there is more than a hint that such may not in reality have been the case, a suspicion that would be increasingly confirmed as time went on, and a problem that the subsequent Chapter would have to resolve.

Another problem that surfaced was the difficulty in understanding and applying the principle of subsidiarity. The Circular notes:

. . . [I]t seems that the application of the principle of subsidiarity becomes a problem principally at the two ends of the chain, so to speak: in the local community, and in the relation between District and the center of the Institute. In the local community, the Director finds his role often confusing, he is uncertain of his identity, of his situation vis-à-vis his confreres. On the other hand, in the Institute at large, there is a tendency on the part of the Districts, sometimes voluntarily, more often involuntarily, to act without reference to the center. The Brothers Visitors [sic] recognized that in both instances it is due to the difficult change in perspective from “authority” to “animation, service”; and also the change from a rigid system of hierarchy in authority, to au-

thorities seen as complementary and collaborating for the general good. We need Christian patience and firm Faith as we make these sometimes painful transitions.²⁷

The Visitors in their meeting did not fail to note the problems that centered on the Brother Assistants, especially the conflict between their role as counselors and their concern for their territorial assistantcies. The Chapter, again in view of subsidiarity, had effectively deprived the territorial Assistants of the power once associated with that office.²⁸ This left the Assistants with very little real responsibility. In reaction to the pattern of domination that had once prevailed, regional conferences and individual Visitors would often find ways to let the Assistants know that their presence in the Districts was either unwelcome or merely tolerated. Some Assistants developed a pattern of inviting one another into their territories as guest speakers. In their role as counselors to the Superior, the Assistants constituted the General Council which proved to be much too large to be effective. Also, rivalries and divisions developed among them, between residential and territorial Assistants, and between those of a conservative bent and those trying to move forward the process of transition and renewal.²⁹



The General Council 1967-1976. The Superior General with the Vicar General and the 15 Brother Assistants.

The Superior himself did not escape criticism for failing to issue more forceful directives to the Institute in a crisis of transition.³⁰ There is surprisingly little reference, in the Circular at least, to the positive impact of the Superior's visits to the outposts of the Institute in every part of the Lasallian world. In a well-organized plan, every region of the Institute was visited by either the Superior or the Vicar-General during the first five years of the intercapitular period. During the second five years, the plan was for the two to swap itineraries. The many art objects tendered to the superiors on these occasions have ever since been on display in the generalate as a testimony to the international character of the Institute and its presence in the most varied cultures. But even this plan was not beyond criticism, especially with regard to the Vicar. Although the General Chapter had specifically charged him to care for the missions, some of the territorial Assistants apparently resented his intrusion into what they considered their personal preserve. The Circular notes that these matters will be studied. It was an early indication that the structure of the central government would have to be revised at the next Chapter, and specifically, that the office of Assistant had outlived its usefulness.

The International Commission on the Vows

One of the recommendations of the Visitors in 1971 was that "an investigation be undertaken, both by the General Council and by a research team under the direction of the Brother Assistant for Formation . . . to study the whole question of commitment to religious life in today's world as it is expressed by the vows or some other form, taking into account the situation in the world today as well as the special charism of the Institute."³¹ Thus, two commissions on vows were formed, one a commission of Assistants from within the General Council, the other an international research team organized by Brother Michel Sauvage, the Assistant for Formation. It was apparent from the beginning that there was a fundamental difference in outlook between the two commissions. After one attempt at a session together, the International Commission on Vows went its own way, without direct reference to the General Council, except for a brief meeting with the entire Council to present its final report once the work was finished. As organized in 1972, the International Vow Commission was composed of Brothers from Canada, the United States,³² the Antilles, Madagascar, Spain, and France. In subsequent years additions or replacements added Brothers from Mexico, Italy, and Thailand to the

group. The Commission had its first meeting in Rome in 1972, met again in Rome in 1973, and in New York in 1974. In that year, Brother Vincent Rabemehafalay, former Visitor of Madagascar and staff member of the International Lasallian Center (CIL), succeeded Brother Michel as chairman. In 1975 the Commission met again in Rome to present its report to both the General Council and the CIL staff and participants.

Since the problems concerning vows seemed for the most part to concern young Brothers, the Commission decided to survey the young men and those in charge of them in formation centers in the United States, Spain, and France, with smaller samples from England, Italy, and Madagascar. The results showed widespread confusion on the fundamental meaning of vows as an expression of consecration, an ignorance of the provisions of *Renovationis causam* and the documents of the 39th General Chapter, and little insight into the relation between religious consecration and apostolic mission. It was evident that a massive catechesis would be needed on the meaning of consecration and vows.

By the time the Commission had finished its work, it was able not only to propose a series of practical recommendations, but also to develop an extensive rationale to support them. Thus it recommended that, in order to make the temporary engagement more of a personal commitment, the individual Brother in dialogue with his local community be given a greater determination of its timing, content, and expression, including the option for promises rather than temporary vows. Insisting on the value of fidelity and the permanent commitment, the Commission felt that it ought to be possible to express that fidelity and commitment by either perpetual vows or temporary vows periodically renewed. The Commission tried also to give some concrete suggestions to make the traditional vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience a more vital, realistic, and positive force in the life and experience of the Brothers. Finally, the Commission made an effort to bring to the fore the importance of the two special vows, especially as they had been renamed and renewed by the recent General Chapter.

This study of the special vows, concentrating on the history of the vows at the foundation of the Institute and the desirability of relating vows to mission, led the Commission to make its most radical suggestion for consideration by the Chapter and the Institute:

That association in a life of brotherhood for a common apostolic purpose be the one and only vow pronounced by the Brothers. This does not mean that the values expressed by the traditional

three vows would be rejected. But the Commission that presents this report had become convinced that to opt for a vow of association alone would better translate the dynamism implicit in the lifetime goals of the Brother. It would give a more specific direction to the values traditionally associated with the canonical vows, i.e., the witness of a simple lifestyle, service of the poor, commitment to community life, and a personal and communal search to discover the plan of God. Furthermore it would eliminate the differences in status among the Brothers as a basis for judgment about them.³³

The report of the Vow Commission was variously disseminated and variously received throughout the Institute. It was circulated widely in the United States³⁴ and France. In some countries, Spain, for example, copies were made available only to the 1976 Chapter delegates, once they were elected. In some other countries it was evidently not circulated at all. The reactions, beginning with the presentation to the General Council and the CIL, and then extending worldwide, ranged from enthusiastic support (not very typical) to shock and hostility, with a fair amount of indifference in between. Much of the opposition, rooted in a failure to study the report as a whole, interpreted the recommendation that association be the only vow as an attack on the very foundation of the religious life.³⁵ At any rate, the report served both to stimulate discussion on the one hand and, on the other, to polarize positions at a moment in Institute history already rife with conflict and uncertainty.

The International Catechetical Commission

In 1971, the Visitors in their Rome meeting had also mandated the establishment of a research committee on catechetics, likewise under the direction of the Assistant for Formation, Brother Michel Sauvage. Eventually the Commission comprised 11 Brothers as members: 4 from Europe, 3 from Latin America, 1 each from North America, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

From the beginning, the Commission decided that it would not be helpful to establish either a new organizational structure in the Institute or an office in Rome to publish and disseminate catechetical materials. Instead, the members described themselves as "a team trying to work by influence and personal contact through various areas of the Institute."³⁶ In the annual meetings at Rome they had a chance to reflect on the results of their contacts, to discover the general

trends in the field of catechetics, and to determine what suggestions to make for the future.

In 1973 the Commission was invited to make suggestions for the upcoming General Chapter. With that in view, the Commission elaborated a series of documents in a 56-page booklet containing reflections on the situation of catechetics in the Institute, some theoretical perspectives, and suggestions for possible action. Bound into the booklet was a series of fold-out pages with charts relating catechetics to the school, to society, to psycho-pedagogical developments, to developments in educational and theological theory.

The report was widely circulated before the Chapter. It does not seem to have attracted the attention nor raised the controversy that followed on the almost simultaneous publication of the report of the Vow Commission. Although both Commissions proved to be valuable experiences for those involved and their reports a stimulation for the Brothers in various ways, neither report received very much formal attention once the Chapter was underway.

Preparations in Rome for the 40th General Chapter

As early as 1972, in its plenary April meeting, the General Council began to address the need to prepare for the General Chapter to follow. The Visitors' meeting recently concluded constituted a kind of watershed, shifting the focus from looking back to the 39th Chapter to looking ahead to the 40th.

The first step was to establish a Preparatory Commission. By the fall of 1972, after wide consultation, a short list of 20 names was submitted to the Council. Out of that list, eight Brothers were finally chosen to join with the Secretary General and the Procurator General to form the Preparatory Commission. A short circular of eight pages was circulated to the Institute to announce the formation and the composition of the Commission.³⁷ Among the eight Brothers chosen were Brothers Maurice Anglim, Visitor of the US Central States District; Brother Saturnino, Auxiliary Visitor of Bilbao in Spain, a delegate who had been a major influence in the 1966–1967 Chapter; Brother Raymond Brisebois, a Canadian who had served as one of the redactors of the Rule in 1967; Brother Robert Comte, a French theologian and a member of the International Vow Commission; and Brother Ambrose Payne, an Australian Brother with a distinguished reputation in pedagogy and catechetics. After the first meeting of the Commission in the summer of 1973, Brother Maurice Anglim found that the demands of administration work in Chicago would make it impossible for him to

continue. Brother William Quinn, who had been the driving force behind the parliamentary organization and conduct of the previous Chapter, was appointed to replace Brother Maurice on the Commission.

At the same time, a second and smaller commission composed of four Brothers with expertise in the social sciences, was appointed to work with the Preparatory Commission. Their function was to prepare a questionnaire to elicit opinions from the Brothers at the grass roots on key questions that the Chapter was expected to face. Of the four Brothers appointed, one was from Oxford, one from Louvain, one from Madrid, and one a French missionary Brother with degrees in theology and sociology working as a research assistant at the Institute of African Research.³⁸

The Preparatory Commission began its first meeting in Rome July 23, 1973, and was joined by the research group on August 6 for an additional two weeks of work. The Superior then issued another short Circular to sensitize the Brothers to the plans concerning the objectives and style of the Chapter.³⁹ In a significant and deliberate departure from tradition, the Superior addressed this and subsequent Circulars concerning the Chapter to "My Very Dear Brother." In avoiding the collective plural, "Brothers," the Superior tried to engage each Brother personally, to challenge him as an individual to enter, with his community, into the work of renewal without which the Chapter could not achieve its purposes.

In the Circular the Superior describes the objective of the Chapter as twofold: to synthesize and evaluate the experience of the last ten years in order to pinpoint the sources of difficulties and the signs of hope, and then to give a new impetus to the spiritual renewal of the Institute through a process of discernment in openness to the Spirit and the Word of God. The style envisioned for the Chapter would stress personal involvement and renewal, intercommunication on every level, an essentially pastoral Chapter that would be the work of the Spirit. The Circular concludes with some remarks on the importance of discernment and the need for each District to become familiar with the various forms of discernment and to use them in the preparation for the Chapter. This was an early indication that the Chapter would be structured to a great extent as an exercise in spiritual discernment.

On April 7, 1974, another short Circular was issued to alert the Institute to the preparation for the coming Chapter and the principal subjects that would have to be dealt with.⁴⁰ The tentative schedule for the opening of the Chapter was set for Holy Week 1976. The principal duties of the Chapter would be to elect a Superior and his Council

and to follow the directives of *Ecclesiae Sanctae* requiring an evaluation of the ten years of experimentation. The Chapter would then have to decide whether to submit the revised texts of the Rule and Book of Government for definitive approval or continue on an experimental basis until the following Chapter. In several paragraphs of the Circular, the Superior exhorted all the Brothers to become involved in the process of renewal. In addition to personal and communal discernment, all the Brothers would be asked to fill out a questionnaire to be distributed in due course.

Interpreting the feedback from the various Districts, the Superior listed four themes that he expected the Chapter to address and encouraged the Brothers to discuss them and rephrase them more concretely in the light of their own experience:

1. The way we live our life of faith and our religious consecration in the real situations of our experience today.
2. Our specific mission, within the school situation and outside the school, in view of the real needs of our time and place.
3. The evangelical value today of our personal lives and of the witness of our communities.
4. Subsidiarity and unity in an international Institute today.⁴¹

The questionnaire was distributed in the late fall of 1974. Bearing the title *What Information Can I Give the Institute on the Occasion of the General Chapter?*, the booklet contained 150 questions seeking the opinions of the Brothers on all the topics expected to be dealt with at the Chapter, including those highlighted by the Superior in his Circulars. There was a special section on the present state of the Institute and the prospects for its future. The administration of the questionnaire was left to the Districts, with the suggestion that the Brothers respond personally and anonymously after an appropriate prayer service in community, preferably on December 8, 1974, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The responses would then be forwarded to Rome to be tallied by computer.

Formal Convocation of the 40th General Chapter

At the suggestion of the Visitors in 1971, the convocation of the Chapter required by the Book of Government was advanced six months. Accordingly, on March 15, 1975, the Superior issued the Circular formally convoking the 40th General Chapter, with the opening scheduled for 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, of Holy Week, April 14, 1976.⁴² As determined by the previous Chapter, the number of elected delegates

would be 140. In addition, the Superior and his Council, as well as the former Superior, Brother Nicet-Joseph, would be delegates by right, bringing the total to 158. The elected delegates were to be apportioned by assistancies, based on the actual number of Brothers in each area, with the provision that every District be represented. This arrangement solved to a great extent the imbalance in the representation that had been such a sore issue prior to 1966. In this system, for example, the French assistancy would have 26 delegates, the United States and Spain would have 21 each, and the two assistancies in Latin America would have 18 delegates between them.

The formal convocation of the Chapter allowed the Districts to turn their attention at once to the election of the delegates. In the northern hemisphere this meant that the elections could be held before the close of the school year then in progress. Representing the assistancy of Brother Leo Kirby, the 21 delegates elected were the following Brothers: four from New York (Amedy Martin, Timothy McCarthy, John Muller, Luke Salm); four from Baltimore (Colman Coogan, Patrick Ellis, Daniel Burke, William Quinn); three from LI-NE (David Detje replacing Gerard Duncanson, Peter Clifford, William Harkins); two from Saint Louis (John Johnston, Camillus Dufresne); two from Chicago (James Gaffney, Konrad Diebold); two from New Orleans-Santa Fe (Paul Walsh, Francis Beck); two from San Francisco (Cassian Frye, Raphael Willeke); one from Winona, MN (Paul Grass); one from the Philippines (Benildo Feliciano).

The Circular gives more than a hint of bitter experiences over the ten-year period in the exhortation addressed by the Superior to the capitulants who would be elected.

What should be the frame of mind of the capitulants? I believe it should be an attitude of sharing with their confreres from other countries, from other districts and regions, the experiences and insights that have emerged from the regional chapters and consultation with the Brothers of the Districts. No capitulant would want to come to the Chapter to impose his ideas or those of his region upon the other members of the Chapter, in no sense will he want to be an agent of pressure, to try to force his point of view on the others. And this is true equally of groups of capitulants from the same region. All must come in order to share with others, not to pressure others.⁴³

The Superior also urged the capitulants who would be elected to work for the growth of the Institute under the inspiration of the Founder's teaching on the spirit of faith and on regularity. The Supe-

rior gives an interesting application of “regularity” that implicitly addresses some of the resistance to the revised Rule.

In the view of our Holy Founder “regularity” means living in the spirit and the letter of the Rule. In accordance with the directives of Vatican II, the general chapter of 1966–67 made a revision of the Rule in view of making it less juridical and more spiritual, so that it can be said to be a treatise on the spiritual life. If we have made this Rule our book of spiritual living, then we have lived a regular life and been a support of our community; if we have neglected to live by this Rule, then we have been irregular, with the consequences pointed out by our Holy Founder.⁴⁴

The Superior then reported that the computer center had received the answers to the questionnaire of the previous December from 11,000 Brothers, “an extraordinary response of 90% of our membership.” He expected that the raw results would be available by Easter (1975) and that the delegates would have all the results, including refined data analysis, in time for use at the Chapter.

The Second US Regional Chapter (1974–1975)

According to the Book of Government, each region was expected to hold two Chapters in the ten-year period between General Chapters, one shortly after the previous General Chapter, and the next prior to and in preparation for the General Chapter to follow. The activities of the second US Regional Chapter can illustrate the preparation taking place worldwide during the intercapitular period for the 40th General Chapter of the Institute.

The first session, held at Lockport, Illinois, in August 1974, was devoted to a study in some depth of the meaning of religious faith in relation to American culture, to education, to the ministry of the Brother in the Church, and to social justice issues. Formal papers were delivered addressing each of these four areas and afterwards were published in an offset format.⁴⁵ Eight committees were formed to discuss the concrete problems and possibilities in each of these areas. The committee reports, most of which contained a series of questions for further research and discussion, were also published in the booklet. The issues that engendered the greatest controversy and dissent concerned theological developments in sexuality and the implications for the Brothers, corporate commitment to educational institutions in relation to individual choice, direct service of the poor in relation to commitment to the schools, subsidiarity in relation to organizational

unity. The booklet also contained a series of "remarks" (in reality minority reports) from various delegates, dissenting from or elaborating on the formal reports of the committees on the controverted issues. This first session seems to have been devoted for the most part to assessing the situation and the major concerns of the Districts of the United States rather than any immediate strategies to prepare for the General Chapter.

The second session, held at Lockport in August 1975, attempted to focus more directly on the General Chapter, and the results of the session were published in a more durable format.⁴⁶ By the time the session opened, all the delegates to the upcoming General Chapter had been elected and the results of the institute-wide questionnaire had been published. Even so, the discussions continued to be dominated by mostly national and local concerns. The session opened with an address by Brother Charles Henry, the Superior General, which helped, in its tone and content, to provide a broader perspective. The Superior himself admitted that the failure to look beyond national boundaries was widespread.

I have noted in the regional chapters of Italy, France, and Spain, that the point of view is far more local than universal, the search for fundamental issues to be studied and responded to has been limited to the experience of each nation; there is very little looking at the situations beyond the national borders. And I guess this is inevitable, and I would hazard the guess that this will be the situation here at Lockport. And it will be of value when the various delegations gather in Rome for the general chapter in April, 1976. . . . I believe we must come to the general chapter in a spirit of sharing with others the values and experiences peculiar to our own region and our own history during the past ten years. . . . I believe too that we must come to the general chapter with an eagerness to listen attentively to the delegates of other regions, and not merely to listen but attentively to hear them and to understand what they are saying to us.⁴⁷

In identifying the issues he considered critical, Brother Charles was somewhat more explicit and forthright than was his wont in circulars addressed to the whole Institute. First of all, he raised problems concerning formation, with particular emphasis on the need for a formal novitiate with a full-time Director as opposed to a growing practice of having candidates make the novitiate in an apostolic community. Second, he singled out the area of catechetics, or reli-

gious instruction, and the need "to retake our position as dedicated to catechetical instruction."⁴⁸ Third, by citing the direction taken by the Jesuits as well as the concerns of the Congregation of Bishops, he expressed concern over the tendency to allow personal option to override common purpose and corporate commitment. In one summary paragraph he mentioned briefly some other topics he thought the General Chapter should address: the service of the poor, mental prayer, gospel witness, the Founder's understanding of the spirit of faith, and our educational mission in the Church.

For the delegates who had been elected to the General Chapter, the 1975 session at Lockport provided the opportunity to organize their preparation to represent the American Brothers. At the first meeting of the delegates and alternates, and after consideration of other candidates, Brother Luke Salm was elected "Chairman of the Delegation,"⁴⁹ a position with no official status, but one that had proven useful in the previous Chapter in 1966. In a series of meetings held during the course of the Regional Chapter, the delegates attempted to identify the principal issues and to assign them to specific delegates to research and report. The committees of the Regional Chapter were also invited to provide input to the delegates on matters pertaining to their areas of study. Finally, the delegates agreed to meet again in New Orleans in late January prior to the already scheduled meeting of the Conference of Visitors.

Apart from the meetings of the elected delegates, and despite the attempt of Brother Leo Kirby, Assistant, in his introduction to the published *Acts*,⁵⁰ to interpret the work of the Regional Chapter in global terms, an examination of the 67 formal propositions indicates that relatively few of them related directly to the forthcoming General Chapter. Those that did concerned temporary vows, the structures of formation, and the function of the Regional Chapters. In this regard, Resolutions 65 and 66 determined that the reorganized Christian Brothers Conference should replace the Regional Chapter, and Resolution 67 recommended that the office of Assistant be abolished.⁵¹ Concerning the last point, Brother Assistant himself made an intervention that, as the *Acts* notes, "was received by acclamation with a standing ovation."⁵² Pointing out that "as the Institute grew and the world changed, we did not [in 1967] renew Central Government but merely added on to an old system," he concluded that the international character of our Institute "would be better served by a series of direct contacts between the Visitors with the Superior General and his Council."⁵³

Preparation for the Chapter by the Elected Delegates

It has been generally recognized that in 1966 the United States delegation came to the first session of the 39th General Chapter better prepared than any other national group. During the intersession the French delegates made up for lost time and had a significant impact on the second session. By 1975 the importance of preparation was acknowledged throughout the Institute as Regional Chapters everywhere addressed the issues that seemed important to them. The remarks of the Superior already cited betray a growing concern that this trend might lead to ideological positions and fragmentation. But there was evidence also that, like the Americans in 1966, many national delegations had a genuine interest to discover and to understand the concerns of their confreres in other parts of the world.

Thus in his opening address at Lockport, the Superior had shared his experience of the Regional Chapter in France. He noted especially the French concern for "the mission of the Institute in the modern situation of society and the Church; basic renewal; our mission in the third world; our educational mission; our service to the poor, the marginalized, the excluded; our service in the rural areas; our community life and its openness to the world."⁵⁴ Not much attention was paid to it at the time, but in retrospect it can be seen as a rather accurate prediction of the preoccupation with the theme of mission that the French delegates would bring to the General Chapter.

The Canadian region also held its Chapter in two successive sessions in 1974 and 1975. The published report shows that the topics discussed and the resolutions passed covered much the same ground as the Lockport sessions: unity, diversity, and subsidiarity in government; apostolic mission; and community life.⁵⁵ One notable difference between the two regions centered on the question of the priesthood. Whereas the Lockport delegates reaffirmed the 1966 decision to exclude the priesthood by a vote of 62 to 7, the Canadians passed by a vote of 20 to 0 a proposition favoring the possibility for the Brothers of a priesthood of "service" under six severely limited conditions.⁵⁶ Differing in one other respect, the Canadians, in their propositions at least, seem to have devoted more time to the foreign missions.

The assistancy of Spain held its Regional Chapter at Tarragona from August 21 to 30, 1975. The Spanish Chapter worked through three commissions: Government, Religious Life, and Ministry. Brother Francis Vessel of the New Orleans-Santa Fe District provided the American delegates with a translation of the propositions that were voted.⁵⁷ Among the more interesting were the following: suppression

of assistancies and Assistants in favor of the Conference of Visitors; General Chapters be held every six years; four options for the expression of consecration, that is, traditional vows, one vow of association for mission, promises to live the Gospel, commitment to Christ according to the Rule and Constitutions.

The most representative of all the prechapter meetings was held at Beauvais in France from October 31 to November 2, 1975. Brother Paul Walsh, Visitor of New Orleans and Santa Fe District was asked to represent the US delegation at the meeting.⁵⁸ Three Assistants were present (France, Canada, and French Missions), along with chapter delegates from 11 countries (22 from France, 16 from Spain, 7 from Canada, 4 from Belgium, 3 from England, 2 from Italy, and 1 each from Austria, Holland, Switzerland, and the United States). Also present were four members of the Preparatory Commission, including Brother William Quinn from the United States.

The delegates met in small discussion groups, general sessions, and language groups. The small groups, after sharing signs of hope for the future, addressed themselves to the role of the Regional Chapters, the needs of youth today, vows, priesthood, and government structures. Two of the three general sessions heard and discussed reports from the Preparatory Commission. Brother Paul in his report describes them as "quite animated and interesting."⁵⁹ The salient points included the need to make the Chapter a unifying force despite decentralization with a stress on fraternal dialogue. It was thought that experts would not be needed except those who were already delegates, that reports should be distributed beforehand, and that some adjustments be made in the plan for the Chapter submitted by the Preparatory Commission. The reports of the language groups uncovered some areas of discontent: a lack of unity of vision in Central Europe, concern in Canada for the unity of the Institute, negative reactions in Italy to the changes wrought in 1967, signs of polarity in Spain, and a suggestion from the French missions that there be no Mission Commission at the Chapter but that a *prise de conscience missionnaire* penetrate all the chapter commissions.

Brother Paul's report ends on an upbeat note.

On Sunday, November 2nd, we attended Mass at the Basilica of Notre Dame de Liesse ("Causa Nostrae Laetitiae"; Liesse-joy) and sang the *Salve Regina* together in the very sanctuary where the Founder and the Brothers made their vows. A very elaborate meal at the Pensionnat du Sacré-Coeur in Reims followed and we then visited the Basilica of Saint Remy where the Founder had so often prayed late into the night, his natal home, the Soeurs du

Saint Enfant and Canon Roland's tomb, and, finally, the magnificent Cathedral of Reims. A total De La Salle day to climax a very fraternal meeting in the spirit of the Founder!⁶⁰

Preparation by the US Delegates

When the American delegates finally gathered in New Orleans on the evening of January 30, 1976, in addition to the assigned reports that each of them had prepared, they had the advantage of the reports from the meetings of delegates in Canada and Europe. A further resource was Brother William Quinn, who had been a frequent correspondent to keep his fellow Americans alert to what was going on in Rome. One issue that seemed to be universally neglected was the matter of possible candidates for the office of Superior General. Writing from Rome in November, Brother William notes:

As to the future superior, there is very little talk here about this topic. In fact, I never hear it discussed unless I get the topic into the conversation myself. There has [sic] been no new developments along these lines since I last wrote to you; I did not hear a single word of this topic at Beauvais, although before leaving Rome I heard the fear expressed that the hidden reason for the meeting was to get the "*grand homme*" to arise from among the delegates.⁶¹

Writing again from Rome in January, just prior to leaving for the United States, he repeats:

There is *no* talk of who the next superior might be. I find that people will not talk about this question, even in response to a direct question. I think this is an unhealthy situation, and I do not know what is behind it—sense of fear, sense of avoiding politics, lack of interest?⁶²

Perhaps the reason for the lack of interest in this topic was a pervasive sentiment that Brother Pablo, the incumbent Vicar General, was the obvious candidate, not only because of his vigor and experience, but also because it might be time for the Institute to entrust its highest office to a Brother from Spain.⁶³

In any case, although a discussion of the candidates for the office of Superior General was the first item on the New Orleans agenda, the topic failed to generate the excitement it had occasioned ten years earlier. It was felt that the US delegation should not endorse or put

forward any particular candidate for that office, leaving the initiative in this matter to other national groups. Some of the US delegates indicated their personal support for Brother Pablo as best qualified to be the Superior. In the likelihood that the next Superior would not be an American, it was agreed that some Brother from the United States should be elected to the General Council. But even in that case, the delegates were not entirely of one mind on the likely candidate, although the majority seemed to favor Brother John Johnston, the Visitor of Saint Louis. In contrast with 1966, and in line with the attitude that Brother William Quinn found in Rome, the matter of elections simply did not arouse much interest in the delegates at New Orleans.

The three-day meeting went smoothly. The assigned reports on the perennial topics of mission, consecration, priesthood, community, and subsidiarity in government, were well prepared and discussed. The Institute questionnaire was not cited extensively, except for the question of the priesthood. The results showed that the majority of the Brothers supported the decision of 1966 rejecting that option, but that there was also a strong and evidently silent minority that favored the possibility of ordination for some Brothers.⁶⁴ However, there was little interest in making this topic an issue at the Chapter. Considerable attention was also given to the report prepared by Brother Leo Kirby, Assistant, on the state of the Region. The delegates were grateful that Brother Leo had shared his first draft of the report and actively sought the advice of the Brothers before putting it into final form.⁶⁵ At the end of the meeting, it was decided that it would not be necessary for the delegation to meet again before the Chapter. In one sense, the issues were so overwhelming as to defy solution; in another sense, in terms of specific concerns to be debated, as Brother William would observe, there were “no real issues.”

The Preparatory Commission in Rome

As already noted, the composition of the Preparatory Commission for the Chapter was announced by the Superior General in Circular 396, dated June 29, 1973, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. The Commission held three meetings prior to the Chapter, the first in July and August 1973, the second and most important from October to December 1975, and the last during the two weeks immediately prior to the opening of the Chapter in mid-April 1976. Among its many duties, the Commission prepared a detailed plan for the conduct of the Chapter, established a dossier of documents to be sent to the capitulants (including analytical studies of the results of the questionnaire), drew up

suggested rules of procedure, and synthesized the contents of the reports of Regional Chapters and the personal notes of the Brothers.⁶⁶

The most innovative feature of the work of the Commission was to organize the work of the Chapter as a process of discernment.⁶⁷ References to the need for spiritual discernment throughout the Institute as preparation for the Chapter were already a common theme in the Circulars of the Superior. With this in view, after the opening formalities, the Chapter would proceed in five phases: Phase I, Information and fraternal exchange; Phase II, Reflection and Exchange, centered on Saint John Baptist de La Salle; Phase III, Discernment of the movement of the Spirit in the Chapter, with a view to forming commissions; Phase IV, Development and formulation through commission work; Phase V, Implementation, depending on the nature of the documentation produced.⁶⁸ The elections to the various offices would be placed toward the end of the Chapter.⁶⁹

The documents sent to the delegates prior to the Chapter constituted a veritable library of source materials: from the Preparatory Commission, the Procedures for the Chapter, the membership lists, Rules of Parliamentary Procedure, Syntheses of Regional and District Chapters as well as Individual Notes; from the various intercapitular commissions, reports on Catechetics, Vows, The Poor, Ministries, Alumni Associations, Missions and SECOLI. In addition, provision was made to distribute either before or during the Chapter the reports of the Superior and each of the Assistants on their territories or the general service under their charge.⁷⁰

On the Eve of the Chapter

As Holy Week of 1976 approached, everything was in readiness for the opening of the 40th General Chapter of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In one sense it was the most thoroughly prepared Chapter in the history of the Institute. Input had been received and processed from representative Chapters at every level, specialized study commissions had prepared their reports, as had all the officials with responsibilities in the central government. The delegates had been elected well in advance and many of them had already participated in a significant way, either on the local or international level, in preparations for the Chapter.

In Rome, there were signs that the Chapter was long overdue. Brother Charles Henry, the Superior General, had successfully brought the Institute through ten very difficult years.⁷¹ But because of the suffering occasioned by the strain of internal conflicts at every level,

fatigue from his own extensive travel, the disappointment at the loss of so many members, and the general failure for the renewal to take hold, he was evidently tired.⁷² The General Council too was not only tired but unwieldy and divided within itself, a situation not improved by the realization that the entire structure would be revamped and that there would be no successors to the office of territorial Assistant.

The theme proposed for the Chapter by the Preparatory Commission was “revitalization.” The hope was that all the preparation, the emphasis on spiritual discernment, and a fresh look at the structure of the central administration might somehow come together to lead the Institute farther along the path to renewal. However that might be, all indications were that this Chapter would be as different in its own way from the Chapter of 1966–1967 as that watershed Chapter had been from those that preceded it.

Notes

1. See *The Acts of the First Regional Chapter of the United States*, Christian Brothers National Office, July 1968.

2. The author found it frustrating that so little attention was paid to these visionary documents in the period immediately after the Chapter. A theologian by profession, a rebel and an enthusiast by temperament, he had the training and the freedom to relativize the structural or legal problems in order to concentrate on the broader issues implicit in the Chapter's decisions.

3. See J. O'Malley, SJ, “Reform, Historical Consciousness and Vatican II” in *Theological Studies*, December 1971.

4. See, for example, his introduction to the published text of the Rule and Constitutions; also, his remarks in his letter to the First United States Regional Chapter, *Acts*, pp. 75–76.

5. The Brothers in the United States were generally unaware of the controversy produced by the conferences. A complete account of the matter appears in the forthcoming biography of Brother Charles Henry written by Brother Ronald Isetti. The text of the conferences, together with a commentary and a defense of the Superior, authored by a committee of four Assistants, was published at the direction of the General Council in September 1969 and entitled *Communication aux Frères*.

6. Circular 394, *Orientations for the Next Five Years*, November 15, 1971, p. 12.

7. Circular 393, dated June 1, 1971, provides more than 40 pages of detailed agenda for the meeting.

8. Letter of Brother Augustine Loes dated October 10, 1971, and addressed to Brother Clement Ferenbach who was then at the Mary Manning Walsh Home in New York. The author is grateful for the loan of the original letter presently in the possession of Brother Augustine.

9. Circular 394, *Orientations for the Next Five Years*, November 1971.

10. In his weekly letters to the provincialate and to his friends in New York, Brother Augustine gives a fine picture of Brother Charles Henry, a

personal friend of his, during the course of the meeting. Some excerpts follow: "Charlie gave a fine opening talk,—in English. He has a wonderful grasp on where its [sic] at" (October 3 to Brother Thomas). "Charles Henry is in very good health and spirits. He has a marvelous calm and good humor. He is also very well informed on all the latest concerning the religious life generally and what's going on in other religious orders. We're lucky to have a leader like him these days. He exercises authority very unobtrusively, yet he gets things done" (October 3 to Brother Clement). "Charlie, as always, seems to be a tower of serenity and wisdom. Everyone has a sense of reasonable security in the presence of his cheerful and calm possession of himself and of the awareness of a scene that surrounds and gives meaning to what we are doing. Thank God! He is very much a part of the international action that finds its center here in Rome. He's a member of the Executive Committee of the Union of Superiors General. He was one of ten elected to be a member of the Synod, but rejected because he is not a cleric" (October 10 to the NY Provinciate).

11. Circular 394, pp. 7–16.

12. See especially notes 73–76 in the previous chapter, together with the accompanying text.

13. This is evidently a reference to the Superior's Christmas letter of December 1969, pp. 11–12.

14. *Ibid.*

15. There were two committees in the Council, one on formation headed by Brother Michel Sauvage, and a juridical committee headed by Brother Maurice-Auguste. According to the report of the Superior in Circular 392, the Council devoted four sessions to a discussion of the formation report (covering the postulancy and novitiate), and six sessions to the judicial report (concerning replacing temporary vows with other forms of commitment).

16. Circular 392, *Commentary on the Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation: Decisions of the General Council*, October 1, 1969.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

18. Circular 394, *Orientations for the Next Five Years*, November 1971, pp. 17–25.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

22. The author is grateful to Brother Augustine Loes for permission to use the English transcription of the intervention that is in his possession.

23. See the transcript cited above.

24. In a letter addressed to the community of the New York Provinciate and dated October 24 [1971], Brother Augustine Loes wrote: "The English and the Irish are amazingly afraid of the service of the poor issue and the Americans are still asking themselves who the poor are. At one point, the English-speaking group had only one meager reference to the poor in the list of conclusions . . . and this was almost eliminated in the voting because people said it only repeated in substance what the previous resolution had stated (with no reference to the poor). The final vote was 10 for, 8 against, 1 abstaining, which meant that it passed by one vote." The author is grateful for the use of the original letter in Brother Augustine's possession.

25. Circular 394, pp. 32–35.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

28. In a letter written after the Visitors' meeting and addressed to the Secretary General "to express a few observations by way of evaluation," Brother Augustine Loes noted that "some Visitors did not have a chance to participate in the discussions because some Assistants spoke too quickly or too often." "This is quite understandable," Brother Augustine continues, "since all of you had spent so much time on the topics of the meeting and understood them better than most of the Visitors. Yet we were brought here to enlarge the Council, more to be listened to, I think, than to be talked to." The letter, dated November 1, 1971, is in the possession of Brother Augustine.

29. In the letter quoted above, Brother Augustine went on to comment on this problem that would become common knowledge as time went on. "At times, too, it became evident that there is some lack of mutual respect and support among the Assistants. This is, of course, understandably human . . . but it is a danger to the open exchange of information and the honest evaluation of this information among the members of the General Council—which is essential to the effective work you are called upon to do." This matter is treated in detail by Brother Ronald Isetti in his forthcoming biography of Brother Charles Henry. On one occasion, Brother Charles confided to the author that there was so much division in the Council that he often had to defer agenda items until certain Assistants were away from Rome. It was also well known that some of the more conservative territorial Assistants would not allow the Assistant for Formation to preside at retreats or workshops in their territories.

30. Circular 394, p. 39.

31. "Report of the International Committee on the Vows," translated by Luke Salm, in *The Vows of Religion and the Brother*; (Christian Brothers Conference: Lockport, IL 1975), p. 1.

32. The member from the United States happens to have been the author, who was on sabbatical leave in Europe at the time the Commission was formed.

33. "Report on Vows," p. 33.

34. A translation of the report, together with a translation of an essay by Michel Sauvage entitled "The Vows of the Brothers in the History of the Institute," was published by the Christian Brothers Conference in Lockport. It was circulated to all the Brothers in the United States with a cover letter by Brother Leo Kirby, Assistant, that amounted to a disclaimer. Copy in ANYD. The report was republished and circulated to a wider public in 1975 by the National Association of Religious Brothers (NARB) in a booklet entitled *The Brothers and their Vows*, an expanded version of the Proceedings of the FSC Spirituality Seminar on the Vows held in 1974.

35. In the New York District alone, a whole series of position papers was generated on this theme, circulated, and ultimately sent to the General Chapter. Copies in ANYD.

36. The report of the Commission is entitled simply, *A Collection of Documents to be submitted to the XLth General Chapter*, Rome, 1975. The passage quoted is on p. 8.

37. Circular 396, *Looking Forward to the General Chapter of 1976*, June 29, 1973.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

39. Circular 397, *The Objectives and Style of the General Chapter of 1976*, September 8, 1973.

40. Circular 398, *General Chapter of 1976: Approximate Date and Subjects for Study*, April 7, 1974.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
42. Circular 399, *Convocation of the General Chapter*, March 15, 1975.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
45. The document is entitled *Work Papers and Preliminary Committee Reports*. The cover identifies the source as The First Session of the Second Regional Chapter, and gives the location and the dates (De La Salle Center, Lockport, August 9–17, 1974), together with the publisher, the Christian Brothers National Office.
46. *The Acts of the Second United States Regional Chapter Second Session*, Christian Brothers National Office, Lockport, 1975.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
49. Brother William Quinn, who had chaired the delegation at the previous Chapter, was in Rome at the time. The Brother Assistant urged that a Visitor, specifically Brother John Johnston, could best lead the group. The election of the author may have been due in part to his experience at the previous Chapter and in part to resistance to pressure from the Assistant.
50. *The Acts*, pp. 7–9.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 74–77.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 81–82.
55. The report covers 26 paper-bound pages, entitled *Chapître Régional Canadien Juin 1975*. Copy in ANYD.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
57. *Propositions Taken from the Acts of the Regional Chapter of the Spanish Assistancy*, translation by Brother Francis Vesel, FSC. Copy in ANYD.
58. On his return Brother Paul submitted a four-page, single-spaced report to "Members of the Christian Brothers Conference and Delegates to the General Chapter." Copy in ANYD.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
61. Letter of Brother William Quinn to Brother Luke Salm, November 14, 1975. Original in ANYD. Copies were circulated to the US delegates. Copy also in ANYD.
62. Letter from Brother William Quinn to Brother Luke Salm, January 10, 1976. Copy for circulation in ANYD.
63. Although Brother Pablo was considered the obvious candidate, there were apparently pockets of opposition. Some Brothers misinterpreted his journeys around the Institute just before the Chapter, especially his visit to the United States, as a campaign trip. That is unfair, since the schedule of visits, as already noted, had been planned years earlier to complement that of the Superior General. The intrigues in the generalate were another source of opposition. It was said that the farther one got from Rome, the better were the chances that Brother Pablo would be elected.
64. An analysis of the results of the questionnaire prepared by the author and submitted to the US delegates revealed the following: a, slightly more than half of the Institute were opposed to the introduction of the priesthood; b, most favoring the priesthood were on study or in formation centers,

whereas most of those opposed were administrators, retired, or teachers; c, most in favor were from 30 to 50 years old, while those opposed were under 22 or over 57; d, opposition was strongest in England, Italy, Missions, France, Belgium, while most in favor were in Canada, Latin America South, United States, Spain, and Asia; e, the United States opposition was strongest in New York and Baltimore, while those most in favor were also from New York and Baltimore, as well as New Orleans-Santa Fe, LI-NE, and Saint Louis. See the author's "Analysis of Responses to Question 5.091 on the Priesthood." Copy in ANYD.

65. The report is entitled "The United States Assistency 1966-1976." Copy with cover letter dated December 20, 1975, in ANYD.

66. See *Report of the Preparatory Commission to the XLth General Chapter*. Copy in ANYD.

67. This emphasis was due in large measure to the influence of Brother William Quinn, who had replaced Brother Maurice Anglim on the Commission after its first meeting. In a phone conversation with the author, just prior to leaving for Rome, Brother William indicated that he would urge a different procedure for the Chapter based on his experiences as adviser to several congregations of Sisters in the United States. The Marymount Sisters, for example, had centered the discernment process around a text from the Gospel of Luke. Out of this, three areas of concern emerged, which were then discussed in small and large groups with a view to developing the outline of a chapter statement. Rather than a gospel text, Brother William thought that the Founder and the concern for youth might serve as the center of discernment for the Brothers' Chapter. Notes taken by the author during this phone call on September 8, 1975, are in ANYD.

68. In a letter dated October 28, 1975, and sent to the author from Rome, Brother William notes, "This plan has been presented to the General Council by way of information (since the P.C. is answerable only to the chapter, and not to the G.C.); the plan received a mixed reaction. The majority approved highly, including the Superior, but a few 2? 3? seemed quite opposed." Brother William then adds what he calls some "personal observations and impressions": "After reading all the Regional chapter reports and the notes of the Brothers, it seems to me that we are going into a chapter with no 'issues.' There is some attempt to manufacture a few issues, but in reality I do not think there are any before the chapter." Original in ANYD; copies of the entire letter were made and sent to all the US delegates. Copy in ANYD.

69. See the report cited above.

70. See the two-sided page entitled *Documents to be Sent to the Capitulars*. The documents are listed in turn with code numbers from D/1 to D/26 and from D/51 to D/56, the latter group being the reports of the "general" services from the Superior General to the Econome General. Copy in ANYD.

71. It is the personal view of the author that the election of Brother Charles Henry in 1966 was providential and that no other candidate could have done any better or even as well. He was the right man at the right time, despite some more negative and retrospective judgments that have been made since. There can be no doubt that he was beloved by the Brothers everywhere, especially in those places he visited where no Superior had ever ventured before. He was also much admired and accepted for his leadership role among the Superior Generals of other orders in Rome. He was particularly helpful to congregations of religious women and used his influence to win for them equal treatment with the Vatican officials.

72. Writing to the author from Rome on November 14, 1975, Brother William Quinn remarked, "Charlie [the Superior] seems as nervous as ever, but otherwise in good health and spirits. He makes it obvious that he will be *very* glad to pass the torch on to other hands." In a letter dated January 10, 1976, Brother William writes, "Charlie is straining at the leash, or so it seems to me; I feel sure that he'll be glad to hand the torch to other hands." Originals and copies for distribution in ANYD.

The 40th General Chapter (1976)

On Wednesday of Holy Week, April 14, 1976, delegates from all over the world assembled at the generalate in Rome to begin the 40th General Chapter of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The scene that greeted them was markedly different from the one that veterans had encountered ten years before. Instead of the austere pre-retreat atmosphere, spread out in the large room used for formal receptions was an elaborate afternoon "tea," Italian style, that included not only biscuits and bonbons but espresso, fruit punches, and an assortment of *aperitivi*. Most of the delegates were dressed in suits and ties; some, wary of the secular implications of the necktie, wore turtle-necks or something more casual; others preferred to stay with the habit or one of the many available varieties of clerical street dress. That dress pattern remained for the duration of the Chapter. The reception gave the delegates a chance to renew old friendships and rivalries or to forge new ones. Not a few were glad for the respite to recover from jet lag or uncertain sleep in an overnight train.

Even more striking was the opening liturgy that began with a solemn procession at 5:30 p.m. The Eucharist was concelebrated by ten Superiors General of the clerical congregations based in Rome, an evident expression of fraternal admiration for and solidarity with their colleague, Brother Charles Henry, who had been a major influence in their deliberations during the difficult ten-year period they had shared. Brother Charles himself delivered the homily at the Mass.

According to the plan proposed by the Preparatory Commission, the work of the Chapter would be an exercise in discernment divided into six phases: Preparation, Information and Discussion, Reflection and Exchange centered on the Founder, Choice of Main Topics to be Studied, Development and Formulation, Implementation. The goal of the process would be to ascertain the principal topics that needed to be studied and then to form commissions to develop the topics and to formulate appropriate resolutions for discussion and vote.

The usual custom of beginning the Chapter with some days devoted to a spiritual retreat was abandoned in favor of having the capitulants attend the solemn services of the Holy Week Triduum either in the generalate or at Saint Peter's Basilica. This arrangement made it possible to schedule working meetings¹ each morning during the last three days of Holy Week. It did not preclude a rather festive noon

meal on Good Friday at which sparkling wine was served with the explanation that it would help the capitulants work "in a spirit of joy." The Chronicler notes in the official chronicle of the Chapter that this was a marked improvement over the ration of peas prescribed in the traditional Rule.²

Phase I: Preparation

Most of the work of the preparatory phase had been completed before the delegates arrived in Rome. As a result of the work of the Preparatory Commission, some 30 documents were distributed to the delegates, including the reports of international commissions, a detailed analysis of the results of the Institute questionnaire, and the reports of the Brother Assistants. What remained of this phase was for the delegates to be seated, the Chapter to be officially constituted, the six-phase program to be accepted, the officers elected, and the Rules of Procedure adopted.

The first working meeting on Holy Thursday morning began with the Superior General presiding and the veteran Assistant, Brother Arthur (formerly Sylvain) Bonenfant, as the moderator or chairman. After the opening prayer, the Superior reviewed the many telegrams that had been received from a variety of official and unofficial well-wishers. The Secretary General noted that 6 of the 140 elected delegates would be replaced by alternates; 5 or 6 delegates were delayed en route and were expected to arrive in a day or two.³ The official list of delegates notes that of the 158 delegates, 18 were members by right. Coming from 39 different countries with 36 national backgrounds, the delegates represented 69 Districts and 4 smaller administrative units known as Delegations. The average age was 51 years and 9 months. To accommodate the much enlarged assembly (46 more than in 1967), several rows of desks had to be added to the open space in the chapter hall in front of the presidential platform. Perhaps the most interesting statistic, and one that would be apparent as the Chapter went along, was the fact that only 28 of the 158 capitulants had been at the 39th General Chapter in 1967. Since 18 of these were the *ex officio* superiors, this meant that only 10 of the 1976 elected delegates were repeaters.⁴ At the 11:00 a.m. meeting on Good Friday, April 16, the Chapter officially opened with the singing of the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and the signing of the Act of Constitution by each of the delegates.

Some of the problems inherent in the size of the assembly and the high percentage of first-time delegates became apparent very

quickly with the instructions concerning the procedure for electing the various officers of the Chapter: a general chairman, 3 moderators, 4 secretaries, a chronicler, and 4 monitors. The delegates were instructed to meet by language groups to submit names of candidates due to be voted the following day. Most of the offices to be filled were familiar from the previous Chapter. New, however, were the monitors (in French, *animateurs-relais*). The discussions in the early phases of the Chapter would be held in small rotating groups rather than permanent commissions, itself an innovation. It would be necessary, therefore, to elect liaison officers to monitor the discussions and report to the Coordinating Commission the pulse of the Chapter, the direction of the discernment process, and the principal issues emerging from it. Once the commissions were formed, each commission would elect its own representative to the Coordinating Commission.

The debate and suspicions aroused by these and other innovations in the planning of the Chapter lasted through the rest of the morning and carried over to the remaining preparatory meetings. Several delegates expressed fear that the monitors would be unable to avoid subjectivism in reporting to the Central Commission, that one person alone could not report accurately the opinions of an entire group. Some argued that to limit the number of monitors to four, representing four language groups, would preclude the possibility of members of minority groups being nominated.⁵ One delegate wondered whether it was legal to discuss or nominate monitors since the Rules of Procedure had not yet been adopted. Other aspects of the report of the Preparatory Commission met with similar objections expressive of fear and mistrust.⁶

On Friday, April 16, Brother Victor Feehan of the District of England was elected General Chairman (*Commissary*) of the Chapter on the third ballot.⁷ On Saturday morning Brothers William Quinn, José Cervantes, and Pierre Legendre were elected as moderators for the meetings, representing English, Spanish, and French language groups respectively. In the election for the office of Chronicler of the Chapter, the mantle fell on a Canadian, Brother Benoît Marcoux.⁸ Elected as secretaries were Brothers Gilles Martineau, Emile Noirez, Joseph Van Khoi, and Henry Steenwinckel.⁹

The second meeting on Holy Saturday morning yielded a positive vote (143 to 8) to accept the proposed program with its six phases. The Rules of Procedure were then presented for discussion and vote. An impasse quickly developed over the question of procedure: what rules to use prior to the adoption of the Rules of Procedure? By the end of the meeting, it was voted to accept the rules on an experimental basis, with the understanding that the disputed articles would



40th General Chapter. At the rostrum from left to right: Brothers Aloysius Meldan, Secretary General; Charles Henry, Superior; Victor Fehan, Commissary; William Quinn and José Cervantes, Moderators; Aldhelm, technician for the electronic system. Above the door is the electronic billboard that lights up to identify the language of the speaker and to indicate when voting is in progress. The device below the clock tallies the votes; Si, N, Ab, JM (Yes, No, Abstain, Juxta Modum).

be subjected to discussion and vote. This meant that the three meetings on Monday, April 19, would be devoted to nit-picking and infighting over the disputed details of the rules before they could be accepted as definitive.¹⁰ The *Chronicler* under date of April 19 notes: "The style and the rhythm of the first meetings of the General Chapter put everybody in a state of malaise." He adds that "Brother Leo Kirby, addressing the Commissary, expressed the dissatisfaction of the assembly and, rather than exhortations to patience, he urged that the Moderator act with controlled speed." The *Chronicler* quotes the expression of one capitulant, "The Spanish raise points of detail and express fear, the Americans demand the close of debate, and the French are waiting for the Chapter to begin."¹¹

The question of monitors that had been hanging fire since the beginning was finally resolved by having six instead of four, each representing a geographical area instead of a language group. Eventually elected as monitors were these Brothers: Vincent Rabemahafaly for Africa, Joseph Khoi for Asia, Pedro Ruedell for Latin America, Paul

Grass for North America, Jaume Pujol (Spanish) and Adriano Pessino (Italian) for Europe.

Finally, after some modifications, the Rules of Procedure were accepted and a work schedule was adopted. There would be three working meetings each day: 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. An attempt to add an additional meeting earlier in the afternoon was defeated. Wednesday afternoon, Saturday afternoon, and all day Sunday would be free. A proposal to have all day Thursday free instead of Wednesday afternoon was defeated. With these decisions toward the end of the evening meeting on Monday, April 19, the work of Phase I, the preparatory phase, came to a fitting end with a round of applause for the efforts of the Preparatory Commission.

Phase II: Information and Discussion

This phase of the Chapter was roughly divided into two parts: information came mostly from the reports of the Superior and the Brother Assistants, as well as from the question period following each presentation; discussion followed in small groups stimulated by short presentations on themes culled from the reports. The reports of the superiors were presented in general assembly from Tuesday, April 20, through Friday, April 23. The short thematic presentations followed by discussion in small linguistically heterogeneous groups occupied the meetings from Saturday, April 24 through Wednesday, April 28.

Presentations by the Regional Assistants

Since these reports had been published in advance, each Assistant was allowed 45 minutes to make a short presentation and then to accept questions and observations from the floor. It would serve little purpose in this context to summarize or analyze each of these reports individually.¹² It will suffice to mention some of the principal themes that emerged in several reports. Almost all the reports referred to declining numbers; difficulties in understanding the principle of subsidiarity or preventing it from becoming an excuse for total autonomy; difficulties among the young Brothers, especially in relation to final vows; the reluctance of some Brothers to teach religion. Formation programs everywhere were reported to be undergoing transition and revision. Most of the regions that had experimented with new-style open communities reported a high level of failure. Some Brothers were having difficulty adapting to structural change in prayer, community life, and the separation of the community from the school.

Despite great interest in the service of the poor, in many places it was seen as a threat to existing institutions.

The variety in the reports reflected the variety in the composition and situation of the regions and the personal style of the presenters. Some regions were quite homogeneous, others markedly heterogeneous; some were concentrated while others were widely scattered; some were small and some were large. Some of the presentations were optimistic, others pessimistic.¹³ Some Assistants, notably Brothers Leo Kirby (US) and Fernando Izaguirre (Spain), had prepared their reports after wide consultation, while others seemed to prefer to give their own impressions of what their constituents were doing and thinking.¹⁴ A certain amount of spice was added during the question periods. Many of the so-called questions were thinly disguised assaults on either the ideology or the situations represented by the speakers, and the responses were given in kind.¹⁵

Although the presentations of the regional Assistants were enlightening in one respect, the general feeling was that the reports took too much time, that they tended to be repetitious, and that for the most part they covered familiar ground. Also, the authority of the Assistants, already eroded by their limited influence in their regions and their inability to act collegially as a council to the Superior, was further diminished by the presumption that the office of regional Assistant was about to disappear.

Presentations by the Assistants General

It may be recalled that the 39th General Chapter in 1967, faced with a choice between a small general council of advisers to the Superior or the traditional Assistants responsible for the regions of the Institute, opted to retain the regional Assistants and to raise the traditional officers in charge of the general services to the rank of Assistant. These latter were the Secretary General, the Procurator General with the Holy See, and the Econome General, hence the designation "Assistants General," a better translation than "General Assistants" for the French *Assistants Généraux*. To their number was added a new office, that of Assistant for Formation. The reports of the Rome-based Assistants General on specific areas of concern to the entire Institute, unlike the reports of the regional Assistants, were required by the Book of Government to be subject to discussion and vote. This proved to be a mere technicality: after discussion and questions, all of these reports were accepted by a large majority.

For the most part, the reports of the Assistants General consisted of descriptions of their functions. Much of this proved interesting to the Assembly. Brother Maurice-Auguste, the Procurator General with

the Holy See, described his experiences dealing with the Vatican congregations. He was questioned closely on possible consequences for the Institute of the new Code of Canon Law, then in what was thought to be the final stages of preparation (the election of a new pope in 1978 delayed its publication until 1983).

Brother Aloysius Carmody, Secretary General—an office dating back to the origins of the Institute—described his multiple role as an international Director of Education, Secretary to the General Council, and Director of the Bureau of Personnel. Some questions were raised as to whether one officer could effectively fulfill all these functions and whether indeed the Office of Education was necessary at the international level.

Brother René Hamel, Econome General, reported on the financial situation of the Institute. During the discussion, various opinions were expressed on the need for an external audit. In some European countries, the Brothers were afraid that any public knowledge of the financial resources of the Brothers might result in either taxation or loss of government aid. Satisfaction was expressed at the work and influence of the international financial council established by the previous Chapter.

Brother Michel Sauvage, Assistant for Formation, emphasized that his report was intended to stimulate reflection on how the Institute should structure its formation policies. In view of vast cultural and local differences, the Institute, he said, found it difficult to arrive at precise directives concerning formation programs, required doctrinal studies, and approaches to catechetics. He defended the *Centre International Lasallien* (CIL) in preference to a traveling team of Lasallian specialists visiting various regions. Despite the difficulties of language and recruiting a permanent staff, he thought that the CIL remained a privileged experience of the diversity and unity of the Institute.

A final report of broad interest was given by Brother Eduardo Almeida, a sociologist from Mexico, on the questionnaire that had been administered throughout the Institute in December 1974. The delegates had at their disposal some five separate volumes giving the raw results as well as charts illustrating by region and subject matter the responses of the Brothers. The presentation was rather technical and took up most of the allotted time (45 minutes). The discussion period raised some questions about the pastoral value of the questionnaire and its overall validity in view of the ambiguity in some of the questions. After all the attention, energy, and expense involved in administering the questionnaire, interpreting and publishing the results, it was astonishing that such minimal formal attention was given to it at the Chapter.

Report of the Superior General

The entire morning of Friday, April 23, was devoted to the presentation and discussion of the report of Brother Charles Henry, Superior General. It soon became evident that this was not to be a report in the sense of describing the events of the previous ten years. Neither would it be an analysis of the positive and negative factors that conditioned the response of the central administration to the needs of an Institute in transition. Instead, after analyzing the historical factors in the growth, decline, and renewal of religious institutes generally, the Superior described the means to be taken to avoid extinction and to assure revitalization. The presentation was greeted with a prolonged standing ovation, directed, perhaps, as much toward the well-beloved person of the Superior as to the content of his talk.¹⁶ The delegates were obviously aware that his presentation was, in fact, a swan song.

The first and longest section of the Superior's report consisted of what some in the assembly recognized as a familiar analysis of the history of the growth and decline of religious institutes founded since 1500.¹⁷ When an institute begins to decline, a critical period of transition determines whether the institute will become extinct or enter a period of new growth and renewal. Not many institutes have come through the transition successfully. Of the institutes founded before 1500, 75% have disappeared; 64% of those founded between 1500 and 1800 have likewise disappeared. The characteristics of the institutes that survived and revitalized were a transforming response to the signs of the times, a rediscovery of the founding charism, and a renewed faith and prayer centered in Christ.

Turning to some personal reflections toward the end of the talk, the Superior focused on what he considered the signs of the times offering the possibility for renewal. The signs of the times he thought most challenging were the following: the yearning of young people today for a deeper spiritual experience; a noticeable zeal in the Church for the promotion of justice in society; a developing ecclesial sense whereby each religious congregation is becoming more conscious of serving the whole Church; a "third Church" emerging in third world countries as described in a book of that name by Walbert Buhlman. On the negative side the Superior cited the apparent apathy of the Brothers for the apostolate of vocations. He concluded his remarks by urging the Chapter to challenge the Brothers to set young people on fire with a desire to serve the Church in a religious vocation.¹⁸

A full meeting was devoted to interacting with the Superior on the content of his talk. Among the additional points he made were the need to be willing to take risks rather than to accept the status quo;

the lack of preparation at the grass roots that made it difficult for many Brothers to understand and accept the decisions of the 1967 Chapter; the need for the 1976 delegates to communicate the mood and decisions of the Chapter to their constituents; the schools as the best means of influencing young people today. Some of the questions and observations could be regarded as conservative and cautionary. One delegate remarked that Brothers say we seem to have no rules: why was there no reference to the Rule in the talk? The Superior replied that he had no reason to do so and that, in any case, the current Rule was more spiritual than juridical. When another asked the Superior's thoughts on becoming a secular institute, he said he had never thought of it, that we were and would remain a religious institute, but that did not mean that we could not learn something from secular institutes. One delegate declared that he had been instructed by the Brothers in his native Poland to deplore the rampant secularization in the Institute and the apparent approval given to it. In response the Superior made several observations: it is neither the Institute nor the religious life that has become secularized but the world around us and we are part of it; influenced by our secular surroundings, we may not say so many prayers but we do pray better; we have to find ways to keep secularization from determining our lives.¹⁹

Small Group Discussions

According to plan, the meetings from Friday afternoon, April 23, through Wednesday, April 28, were to be devoted to discussions in 8 small groups of about 18 delegates, each assigned at random without regard for language. The discussions were intended to follow the "information" contained in the various reports and in the responses to the 1974 questionnaire. To focus the discussions, a short presentation was given in general assembly each day on a topic of general interest culled from the reports that had been presented. The composition of the groups rotated so as to provide maximum interaction among the delegates with their varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The four topics chosen for discussion were the apostolate, formation, community, and government. The task of providing a printed outline and a brief presentation based on the reports of the Assistants was assigned to four Brothers: René Bonnetain for the apostolate, Pedro Ruedell for formation, Francisco Tudanca for community, and Victor Feehan for government. In each case the half-hour presentation in general assembly was shared with Brother Raymond Brisebois, who highlighted the relevant section of the questionnaire responses.

The presentations and the group discussions once again covered familiar ground. The principal questions in the area of the apostolate centered on the choice, or balance, between an apostolic presence in traditional institutions and direct apostolic service to the truly poor. The topics discussed relative to formation centered on the diminishing numbers of new candidates, the various attempts to reorganize formation programs, and a new emphasis on continuing formation for older Brothers. The major issues in community life seemed to be a collapse of traditional prayer forms, a lack of authority and leadership in community, and a growing awareness that the community needs to provide a healthy affective life for the Brothers. The principal concern in government was to find an adequate way to preserve both local autonomy and a relationship with the center of the Institute without the mediation of the traditional regional Assistants. The opportunity to meet face to face with delegates from a variety of backgrounds proved interesting and informative. While the effort to bridge the language barriers demanded patience and provided some good humor, it prevented the discussions from becoming very profound. The fundamentally different points of view on major issues were smoothed over in polite deference, fraternal sentiment, and confusion of languages.

An additional topic was introduced on Wednesday, April 28, to round out the phase of the Chapter devoted to information and discussion. Brother José Cervantes presided over a panel of three delegates on the topic of young people today. The stated purpose of this assembly was to sensitize the delegates to the needs of the young and to see how the Institute was responding to these needs in various parts of the world. The panel consisted of Brothers Benildo from the Philippines, Anselme from Madagascar, and Othmar Würth from Switzerland. The first two emphasized what the Institute was doing to promote social justice, literacy, and the Catholic faith among the young in Asia and Africa. Brother Othmar described how some of our boarding schools in France and Switzerland had been transformed into rehabilitation centers for young addicts. In the discussion period, considerable support was expressed for the need to create new opportunities for the Institute to bring the kingdom of Christ to the world of the young.²⁰

Phase III: Return to the Founder

From the beginning the entire Chapter was planned as an exercise of discernment, the Founder as the focus. The exchange of information and discussion over the previous week would now, in this third

phase, be tested in relation to the person, the achievement, and the vision of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. It was expected that out of this process would emerge the principal agenda for the Chapter to address in commissions and to bring to the assembly for discussion and vote. As it turned out, the relationship of this phase to what went before and, even more so, to what followed was not altogether clear. From another point of view, however, these few days devoted to the Founder proved to be more inspirational, encouraging, and enriching than anything that preceded or followed.

Thursday morning, April 29, saw the opening of this phase of the Chapter. As was customary, the previous afternoon was given over to the mid-week half holiday. As was also customary during this very rainy springtime in Rome, it had rained again, as it had been doing on Saturdays and Sundays. The weather was something of a strain on the psyche of the delegates already inundated in torrents of words in a variety of languages. The General Chairman announced that a group of delegates had signed a petition asking the Coordinating Commission to arrange that henceforth the sun would shine on free days. He promised to refer the request to the proper Authority. The request was only partially granted.²¹

Panel I:

What does Saint John Baptist de La Salle mean to me personally?

A panel of four Brothers from countries in the southern hemisphere witnessed to the significance of the Founder in their personal lives. Brother Fernando from Ceylon stressed the human qualities of the Founder, his concern for the poor, and the creative way in which he responded to their needs. Brother Zuza Bola from Zaire admitted that the Founder was not attractive at first, not "sunny" enough for the African mind-set. But closer study reveals an authentic human being, totally at the disposal of those in need. Brother Noé Zevallos from Peru found inspiration and a model in the Founder's personal itinerary, one that led to a deliberate choice to abandon his upper class background to be with the poor. Brother Joseph Van Khoi from Saigon discovered in the Founder's willingness to dispose of his material possessions a motive to accept from the superiors his assignment to Thailand. In the discussion period, thoughts such as the following were expressed: we need new Founders, a new way of being Brother, of being rooted in reality; we need to get beyond the Founder's austere image to see his genuine human reality; we need to share the Founder's ability to hear the call of God in the needs of the poor today; the Founder continues to live in his disciples.²²

Presentation by Brother Maurice-Auguste on the Foundation of the Institute

Brother Maurice used the Founder's memoir on the habit of the Brothers as the point of departure for his presentation. De La Salle wrote the memoir in response to Father Baudrand, the pastor of Saint Sulpice, who wanted the Brothers to adopt the ecclesiastical cassock. The emphasis in the document is less on the habit than on what it signifies: the cohesion and identity of a distinctive community, having everything in common, living a common lifestyle according to rule. The habit, which was neither secular nor ecclesiastical, distinguished the Brothers from any other group. They did not constitute a religious order, nor did they belong to a company of priests; yet neither were they civilians living in the world. Living apart in community and consecrated, they were devoted to keeping schools and training others to be teachers. The Institute was founded on divine Providence with neither ecclesiastical nor civil approval, to which the Founder was indifferent and even reticent. His constant concern was to maintain the cohesion of the community by having a distinctive habit and by the optional vows of association, stability, and obedience.²³

Two Brothers were appointed to lead the response to the presentation. Brother Juan Sagastagoita from Spain asked why it was that the Brothers, who knew and revered the Founder and would have known his intent, asked for canonical approval and the vows of religion in 1722, so soon after the Founder's death? To this, Brother Maurice replied that the Founder was wary of canonical structures. We simply do not know why the early Brothers asked for the vows of poverty and obedience in their petition for the Bull of Approbation. The Founder's vow of "association to keep gratuitous schools" contains the totality of the Brother's consecration: association supposes obedience and stability. On the other hand, we cannot simply discard 250 years of history during which the Institute increasingly tended in the direction of the canonical category of a religious congregation with simple and public vows.

The other formal respondent was Brother Vincent Rousso, Auxiliary Visitor of Malta, which forms part of the District of London. He emphasized that the life of the early Brothers involved more than sharing. They also lived in consecrated celibacy and in obedience to authority. Today rules and structures, are needed as well as some distinctive sign, even if the habit is considered an anachronism.²⁴

In the brief time left for open discussion, Brother Rybicki, the delegate from Poland, made an earnest plea for wearing the habit as a mark of fidelity to the Founder. To this Brother Maurice repeated what he had already said, namely, that in the Founder's writing the

habit was treated not for itself but for its meaning as a profound expression of the cohesion of a community in a determined historical period and a determined social context.²⁵

Panel II:

What does Saint John Baptist de La Salle mean to me personally?

The panelists for the opening meeting on Friday, April 30, which coincidentally was the 325th anniversary of the Founder's birth, were chosen this time from the northern hemisphere. Brother Timothy McCarthy from New York cited several instances in his personal life where he was able to identify with the Founder's expression, "I adore in all things the will of God in my regard." Brother Jaume Pujol from Barcelona thought that the Founder's extraordinary personality had great relevance for young Brothers today. He stressed that the Founder knew how to relate to young people in the real world and that in this regard he was ahead of his time. Brother Jaume expressed the hope that the Chapter would say something loud and clear to the young Brothers today, since they are our future.²⁶ Brother Paulus Adams, Assistant from Belgium, stressed the unity in the Founder's life, his determination not to separate the duties of his state in life from concern for his salvation. Brother Rybicki from Poland saw the Founder as a model of total commitment in obedience, a model as well of sanctity and dynamic fidelity. In the open discussion that followed many of these same ideas were repeated, especially the unity of the vocation, obedience to the divine will, the continuing importance of the Founder, and the need to be concerned about young people.

Presentation by Brother Michel Sauvage on Lasallian Spirituality

Faced with the impossibility of covering the entire scope of Lasallian spirituality in the short time allowed, Brother Michel opted to focus on one aspect, the one developed in the sixth chapter of the book he coauthored with Brother Miguel Campos, entitled *Annoncer l'Evangile aux Pauvres*. In the experience of encountering God through the encounter with the poor, De La Salle searched for a way to show the Brothers that they share in the mystery that is the history of salvation. In urging a spiritual reading of the experience of the saints as they contemplated Jesus Christ, the Founder placed the experience of the Brother in line with the example of Christ. This means that the experience of the Brother becomes a participation now in the mystery of Christ with all its dynamic power. This view of faith allows the Brother to see Jesus Christ in the poor. As a minister of the God who saves

gratuitously, the Brother is called to announce the Gospel gratuitously. Like Christ, the Brother is called to announce the Gospel to the poor from within the world of the poor.²⁷

Once again, two Brothers were appointed to give formal reactions to the presentation. Brother Octavio from Medellin reported that in his District there was hesitation in the matter of abandoning the higher social and ecclesiastical classes in order to serve the poor. He said, however, that many Brothers in his District were convinced that the paschal mystery demands that we enter into the experience of death in order to rise to new life. Several like-minded of his Brothers had been meeting recently to find ways to bring their convictions to the attention of the Chapter.

Brother Benoît Marcoux from Quebec responded in a rather different direction. There is no doubt that the encounter with the poor was a privileged moment in the spiritual itinerary of De La Salle. If we go to the poor as he did, who will evangelize the others? In Canada, the choices would be to go to the poor, who are in the public schools, open to all, where we could no longer teach "together and by association"; to open private schools where the Christian atmosphere would be assured but where access for all would not be possible; or to leave the schools altogether to devote ourselves to educational works outside the schools. Furthermore, we have to consider not only economic poverty, but other forms such as affective or religious poverty. In the face of these options, it is difficult to decide what concrete direction we should take in today's situation in order to remain faithful to the Founder.

In the short time that remained for responses from the assembly, Brother Rybicki asked whether it was true that the Founder was not very well endowed temperamentally to become an innovator, a writer, a founder, and a friend of the poor. Brother Michel replied that he would hesitate to say that De La Salle's nature was opposed to what he was eventually led to accomplish. Certainly, his psychological make-up did not prepare him for that. On the other hand, even if the Founder lacked certain natural tendencies, he did declare that he did not feel called to be either parish priest or canon. When the Founder wrote in one place of "the talents and graces you have received," he shows that he makes no separation between the role of nature and the role of grace.

Brother John Muller had time to make a series of observations from the floor: (1) Brother Michel and the other Lasallian scholars deserve thanks for their research and its results that invite us to make the link between the charism of the Founder and the signs of the times; (2) the presentation on the Founder's spirituality can help inte-

grate the fundamental values of religious consecration in a community with an apostolic mission; (3) the apparent passivity of the Founder in the face of the political and socio-economic problems of his day is surprising since they are tied to the apostolic mission of education; (4) the transformation and liberation realized by the educational mission of the Institute must impact the whole person, not only through religious education but also by integrating human values with religious values.²⁸

Presentation by Brother John Johnston on the Challenge of the Founder to the Brothers Today

Brother John organized his presentation, intended as a catalyst in the common search for De La Salles's challenge, around eight statements that, as he said, sound simple but are not, as his development made clear. At the end of the talk, he summarized the eight challenges as follows: (1) Understand our vocation more profoundly—penetrate the meaning of being called by God: be signs, both personally and communally, of his saving presence; (2) Be religious men, have a religious stance to the world, be men who believe that "Jesus is Lord," men of prayer, men of simplicity of life; (3) Be zealous men, impelled by the love of Christ, "willing to give our very life, so dear to us are the children entrusted to us" (MTR 6); (4) Be religious educators, by our personal and communal witness, by our contribution to the formation of Christian communities, by formal religious instruction; (5) Be signs of the Lord's presence to the poor, by identifying ourselves with their concerns, by working for social justice and peace, by educating them directly; (6) Be educators, realize that education is truly an apostolate; (7) Be brothers—in De La Salle we have the same father, we are his sons, we have his life, we are brothers; (8) Be faithful, keep saying "yes" in spite of everything.

Such a summary, rather abstract and essentially positive, does not do justice to the critical insights, the concrete realism, the forcefulness of the development, and the presentation. In particular, Brother John pointed out that Brothers fail to understand the definition of our vocation as stated in the Declaration, and do not always see the need to integrate the three elements of religious consecration, community, and apostolate. Although these elements are distinguishable, they are not to be separated from one another. He wondered to what extent in our lived experience we are truly religious men, especially in the matter of a vital life of personal prayer. Likewise, he questioned whether the Brothers generally "have internalized the concern for the poor that is of the very essence of our vocation." His development of this theme

was the most extended in the presentation, the most challenging, and the one that made the greatest impact on his audience.²⁹

In response, Brother Yeoh Thean from Penang agreed that we must be attentive to the young and respond with courage and lucidity to their needs without losing sight of our purpose, which is education in the faith. We need to renew the spirit of faith and prayer. Renewed faith and zeal are necessary if we are to bring the gospel message to young people today. Brother Dominic Samne, from what was then called Upper Volta, noted that the identity crisis concerning our vocation was also a problem in Africa. Our identity should not be dictated from outside. The challenge of the Founder to the African Brothers is this: "Do you have the hardihood and the perseverance necessary to give birth to a religious life that will have an African look to it?" In the African context, the presence of Brothers from different cultures creates problems in communities. The challenge of the Founder in this situation might be: "Will you be able to transcend your differences to be in a position to achieve the purpose of the Institute?"³⁰

In addition to the formal presentations and group discussions during this phase of the Chapter, an effort was made to create a prayerful atmosphere as an aid to the process of discernment. To that end, a solemn procession went from the chapter hall to the relics of the Founder,³¹ which at that time were housed in an alcove in the main chapel of the generalate. After a prayer service came an all-night vigil in the chapel of the relics, the delegates taking turns to pray to the Founder for divine guidance of the Chapter in the days to come.

Phase IV: Discernment to Establish Commissions

Following the plan established by the Preparatory Commission, the delegates spent the week beginning on Monday, May 3, trying to establish commissions as the climax of the discernment process. The stated purpose was to find ways to accomplish the goal the Chapter had set for itself from the beginning, namely, the revitalization of the Institute. But the process was a most difficult and frustrating experience for both the Coordinating Commission and the delegates. The long period of reports and exchanges that had been intended to facilitate the discernment process seemed only to have delayed and complicated it.

The plan presented on that Monday envisioned that the rest of the morning would be devoted to personal prayer and reflection, then there would be meetings in eight heterogeneous groups of ten, fol-

lowed by meetings in groups of twenty. Each of the latter groups was asked to isolate about five major themes that would respond to the question: In view of revitalization, what does the Chapter want to bring to the Institute of today? In that way, it was hoped that within two days the Chapter could define its general and specific objectives. After some discussion and suggestions of alternate plans, the plan proposed by the Coordinating Commission was accepted.

At the general assembly on Tuesday afternoon, the secretaries of the eight groups of twenty presented their very extensive lists of topics suggested in the group discussions. As the editor of the *Bulletin* described it, there were "not five but a hundred and five." The assembly had then to decide on a manageable number of themes to be discussed in commission.

The first theme to win general acceptance was that of the mission of the Institute. The French delegates, in particular, had been arguing that this should be the theme of the Chapter, the unifying thread that should engage all the commissions. In view of the dynamics of the Chapter, it is not surprising that this attempt to give special status to the idea of mission was countered with the insistence that consecration be the next theme.³² Recruitment and formation was the third topic to be voted as a theme, then government. At this point, it was becoming apparent that, despite the elaborate process, the commissions would be essentially the same as at the previous Chapter. In an attempt to go in a different direction, it was suggested that the world of young people today would be a worthy topic. That was rejected as being already included in the idea of mission. Then a proposal to have a commission to study the Institute in missionary countries was accepted under the rubric of the Institute in the Young Churches. As the time for adjournment was approaching, it was not possible to agree on any additional themes.

The general assembly scheduled for early Wednesday morning, May 5, was postponed to give the Coordinating Commission time to reconsider what was happening. When the assembly reconvened in mid-morning, the proposal to include spiritual renewal as a theme precipitated a complicated discussion, not only on the substance of the proposal, but on methodology, the relation of the accepted themes to the commissions to be formed, and various points of order. When put to a vote, the motion to add spiritual renewal to the list of themes passed by a majority of 113 to 35. Then a point of order was raised, forcing a second vote that resulted in a tie.

In the face of this impasse, the Coordinating Commission abandoned the original plan and presented an entirely new one for the following day. The groups of ten, and then twenty, would meet again to

try to come up with more specific themes. Agreed upon so far was the general objective of the Chapter, namely, the revitalization of the Institute. In addition, five fundamental areas of concern had already been identified and accepted. It was now up to the groups to determine the specific objectives before commissions could be formed. This new proposal met with new points of order and alternate proposals. In desperation, one capitulant moved that the Chapter undertake an evaluation of itself and of the Coordinating Commission. That motion failed. Since it was Wednesday, with a free afternoon in the offing, there was not time to vote the new plan and the meeting had to be adjourned. The break proved to be what was needed. In a half-hour assembly on Thursday morning, after relatively few questions of clarification, the new plan was adopted by a vote of 113 to 38.

The new round of group discussions did not change very much. The secretaries of the groups, instructed to meet before the evening assembly to make a synthesis, found it impossible to do so. It was evident that not all the groups understood the meaning of "specific objectives" in the same way. At the Thursday evening session, each secretary presented a report and printed lists of the specific objectives proposed by the each group were distributed. The total number of specific objectives proposed was 138.³³ A long discussion followed. Apart from some pleas for further delay and alternate methodologies, most of the interventions noted that it was possible to see in the reports certain lines of convergence and, therefore, that it was time to decide on the commissions. At the end of the meeting it was announced that the Coordinating Committee would meet to review the day's work and to examine the written suggestions that had been received relative to forming commissions.

At the beginning of the assembly on the morning of Friday, May 7, the Superior General, Brother Charles Henry, announced that he would be absent for a few days in order to join the African bishops meeting in Ghana to discuss religious life in Africa. The rest of the meeting was given over to the report of the Vicar General, Brother Pablo Basterrechea. He described his experience as a member of the General Council and also as coordinator for the international missionary effort of the Institute. Following the two divisions of his report, the question period focused at first on the prospects for a much smaller general council and on the role of the Vicar within it. Attention was then given to the role of the Vicar as coordinator of the missionary activities of the Institute. The problem here was the possibility of conflict between the missionary coordination at the center in Rome and the demand for local autonomy in mission areas. There was some discussion as to the work of SECOLI,³⁴ particularly the balance between

its economic and pastoral function. Special recognition was given to Brother Vincent Gottwald for his leadership role in SECOLI over the previous ten-year period.

Once again, a fortuitous interruption gave the Coordinating Commission an opportunity to sift the results of the previous week's work and to present concrete proposals at the second Friday morning meeting. Six Commissions were proposed: Mission, Consecration, Formation, Community, Young Churches, and Government. Each commission would take into account the synthesis of the notes sent to the Chapter, the reports of the international commissions, the Documents of the 1966–1967 Chapter, the reports of the Brother Assistants, and the reports of the small discussion groups of 20. After some discussion and refinements, especially concerning the repartition of specific topics, the proposal was adopted by a vote of 99 in favor, 9 against, and 41 in favor with reservations to be submitted in writing (the famous *juxta modum* vote). The written reservations on disputed points were synthesized and voted in the Friday evening assembly. Two proposals were accepted: that the question of the priesthood be treated by the Mission Commission; that there be a special commission on the Young Churches. Two proposals were defeated: that all the commissions begin their work with a special study of the mission of the Institute; that each commission begin its work by defining its objectives and submit them to the assembly for approval. The delegates were then instructed to sign up before 10:00 p.m. that evening with first and second choices for a specific commission.

Finally, on Monday, May 10, the membership of the commissions was determined by the first choice of the delegates. The commissions on mission and government were oversubscribed, the commission on formation attracted the smallest number. Capitulants who had put formation as a second choice were urged to consider changing, but very few did so. After a short meeting on Tuesday morning to tie the loose ends together, Phase IV officially came to a close and the commissions were finally ready to go to work.

Phase V: Part One—Work in Commissions

As in most deliberative assemblies, the preparatory work of the General Chapter is done in specialized commissions, which then elaborate propositions for discussion and vote in general assembly. In this Chapter, almost a month had passed in reports and exchanges of various kinds before the Chapter could address the important issues in a formal way. The time frame for the commissions to complete their

work was relatively brief, in effect, the 12 working days between May 11 and May 25. To allow time for commission work, only two meetings in general assembly were scheduled during those days. On Saturday morning, May 15, which normally would have been a holiday to celebrate the feast of the Founder, a general meeting settled some unresolved disputes over the Rules of Procedure³⁵ and heard brief progress reports from the commissions. On Thursday afternoon, May 21, another series of progress reports was presented in general assembly. On all other days, commission work occupied the capitulants fulltime and sometimes overtime.

During this period, various events were scheduled for evenings and the free days, most related in one way or another to the proximity of the feast of the Founder. On Wednesday, May 12, the capitulants were invited to a musical program and supper at the Brothers' school in Rome on Via Flamminia. On Thursday, May 13, Brother Richard Allen, the English Assistant, gave a conference of his first-hand experiences in visiting the Brothers behind the iron curtain, including, besides the somber and painful aspects of the situation, a good bit of cloak and dagger material, complete with disguises, faked documents, secret rendezvous, and the rest. On Friday evening, May 14, Brother Georges Ley gave a thrilling recital of masterworks by Bach, Liszt, and César Frank, among others, on the magnificent chapel organ. The Eucharist for the feast of the Founder was celebrated by Cardinal Maximilian von Fürstenberg. On the following Monday Archbishop Eduardo Peronio, a friend of the Brothers from Argentina and Prefect of the Congregation for Religious, who had recently been named a cardinal, celebrated the evening Mass.

As the work progressed, or failed to progress, each of the commissions began to take on a distinctive character. The Mission Commission was large enough and the topics assigned to it diverse enough for it to function most often in subcommissions. The Commission on Consecration was sharply divided along theological and ideological lines. This complicated its efforts to define the meaning of consecration and, at the same time, propose practical solutions for problems related to the vows. The Community Life Commission appropriately seemed to be the most congenial,³⁶ building itself into a community as well as talking about it. The Formation Commission did its best to elaborate strategies to meet the vocation crisis, fully aware that many of the factors involved were beyond its control. The Commission on the Young Churches was enthusiastic and energetic, dealing with a number of the questions assigned to other commissions, but in a missionary context. The Government Commission, fittingly, was the most businesslike, with a very specific focus to its work in

preparing a revised Book of Government. All the commissions felt the pressure of time constraints and the impossibility of dealing adequately with the assigned agenda.

Election of the Superior General and his Council

During Phase V of the Chapter, woven between the work in commissions and the presentation of commission reports to the assembly, procedures were established for the election of the Superior and his Council. Given the minimal interest manifest in the subject up to this point, at least in comparison with 1966, the incumbency, vigor, and evident availability of the Brother Vicar, and the lack of other strong candidates,³⁷ it is amazing that so many meetings had to be devoted to proposing, discussing, and revising the procedures for the elections.

The process for the election of the Superior was set in motion with the brief report of the Government Commission on Friday, May 21. The Commission reported that it intended to propose for the central government a relatively small team that could form at the center a community to guide the Institute. After responding to a series of nervous questions about the allocation of powers, the commission proposed a complicated method of discernment to precede the election. The assembly voted to accept the proposal. In the next general assembly, however, on the following Wednesday, the Coordinating Commission, in the face of objections and confusion over the proposed discernment, succeeded in having that vote nullified. Then a simpler method of discernment was proposed. A preliminary survey was undertaken in which 53 of the 158 capitulants received nominations. At the beginning of each of the next five meetings, a ballot was taken with a view to providing a list of nominees supported by a majority of the assembly. At the same time, delegates could ask to have their names withdrawn, as many did in the course of the successive ballots. On the first nominating ballot, Brother Pablo, the Vicar, received a majority, as did Brother John Johnston on the second. No one received a majority on the third ballot. Brother Patrice Marey was nominated on the fourth ballot, as were Brothers Bernard Merrian and José Cervantes on the final nominating ballot on May 29. The election was set for Thursday June 3, with a special charge to the Government Commission to complete its proposals on the central government before then.

The election of the Superior General is always a moving experience, even after 1967, when some of the practices modeled on the

papal conclave had been abandoned. In 1976, there was no procession from the chapel to the chapter hall immediately after Mass and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, as had been traditional. There was no fasting, but breakfast as usual. The election assembly was scheduled for the usual hour of 9:00 a.m. The "Founder's chair," which according to tradition had been used by the Founder when he taught classes at Grenoble, was now enshrined and deemed too deteriorated for use by the new Superior receiving the homage of the capitulants.



40th General Chapter. Brother Charles Henry presents the seals of the Institute to Brother Pablo, his newly elected successor.

The assembly opened with the invocation of the Holy Spirit. The delegates recited a solemn oath promising to elect the person each considered best qualified to serve the Church and the Institute. Then a written ballot was cast individually by each capitulant in turn. The ballots were counted and read aloud by the tellers. About half-way through the reading of the first ballots, a short burst of applause indicated that Brother Pablo Basterrechea had achieved the required majority. When the counting was finished, he had received a total of 80 votes. The runners up were Brothers John Johnston with 33 votes and Patrice Marey with 23. After formally accepting the election, Brother Pablo received from Brother Charles Henry, his predecessor, the seal

of the Institute and the other symbols of his office. At that moment he became the first Spaniard and the second non-Frenchman to become Superior General of the Institute. The capitulants then rose in turn to give the accolade, the doors of the chapter hall were opened, and a procession formed to go to the chapel where a solemn *Te Deum* was sung.

At the beginning of the evening assembly, the newly elected Superior presented a brief message saluting all the Brothers "without exception and of whatever persuasion." He indicated that he wanted to create an atmosphere of simplicity, that he preferred to be called Brother Pablo, or José Pablo, reserving the title of Superior for formal occasions. He paid tribute to Brother Charles Henry in remarks that were greeted with a long ovation. He then extended his greeting to the Brothers, much as the pope is accustomed to do on great occasions, in a variety of languages, including such indigenous languages as Polish, Swahili, Vietnamese and, of course, his native Basque.³⁸ Even the election of the Superior could not give way to the pressure of time: a working meeting was held that evening from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m., followed by a Mass of Thanksgiving.

The election of the members of the General Council was scheduled for the following week on June 7. The new Superior asked the delegates to meet according to regions and to submit to him names of potential candidates from which he would draw up a list of nominees. When the list of 14 names was published, it contained 5 holdovers from the previous Council, while important areas were left unrepresented. After some objections were voiced, two more names were added to the list, one from Brazil and the other from the Philippines, both of whom were eventually elected. The Government Commission had already won approval for a rather different type of council around the Superior, designed to constitute an authentic community at the center of the Institute and well described in the revision of the Book of Government.

This Council should bring together around the Brother Superior a team as diversified as the Institute itself, composed of Brothers capable of forming a close union among themselves and acting in a collegial manner. They should be chosen for their complementarity, their spirit of generosity in sharing their responsibilities and their experiences, their willingness to serve and a desire to collaborate with the Superior, who holds the principal position of responsibility in the Institute.³⁹

With these criteria in mind, the Chapter was again presented with a procedure for the election of the councilors. Six were to be chosen,

one of whom would then be elected Vicar General. The original plan was to vote for the councilors one at a time. There was objection to this procedure on the grounds that it would favor the larger delegations and prevent the election of Brothers from minority cultures. Once again, the procedure was changed to vote in blocks of six with election going to anyone receiving a majority vote. On the first ballot, four candidates received a majority: Brothers John Johnston, Visitor of Saint Louis, Patrice Marey, Assistant for France in the previous Council, Vincent Rabemahafaly, former Visitor of Madagascar, and José Cervantes from Mexico. Twenty-six other candidates received less than a majority, from one to 77 votes.⁴⁰ Brother Benildo Feliciano, Visitor of the Philippines, was elected in the second round of voting, and Brother Pedro Ruedell, Visitor of Port Alegre in Brazil, was chosen in the third round.⁴¹ In the election for the office of Vicar General from among the elected councilors, Brother John Johnston was the easy victor, with Brother Patrice Marey the runner-up.⁴²



40th General Chapter. Brother Pablo, the new Superior, with Brother John Johnson, Vicar General, and the newly elected Councilors, replacing the former Brother Assistants.

Phase V: Part Two—Commission Reports and Capitular Decisions

Beginning with May 26, during the time not devoted to the elections, most of the scheduled meeting time was spent in general assemblies to hear, to discuss, and to judge the reports of the commissions. From then on, the unfinished work in commissions had to be completed in what hitherto had been free time, a factor conducive neither to leisurely reflection nor to serenity in debate.

The Rules of Procedure required that commission reports be circulated 24 hours before being brought to the assembly floor. The reports were then to be presented orally; there would be time for questions of clarification (*éclaircissements*), which were often thinly disguised points for debate. Discussion of the report as a whole followed. Once a report was so accepted, it was possible in a subsequent meeting to discuss, amend, and vote provisionally, one by one, the propositions set forth by the commission. These propositions would then be reviewed by the commission in the light of amendments and *juxta modum* votes, and brought back for final vote. The process was designed to allow full time for study, debate, striving for consensus, and the opportunity for revision. These advantages, however, proved costly in terms of time wasted on minutiae, attempting to cover all loopholes and to provide for every conceivable eventuality, and the airing of partisan positions and competing ideologies.⁴³

By Thursday, June 10, with the scheduled closing of the Chapter little more than a week away, it was clear that the Chapter could never complete its agenda as planned. An extra meeting was added at 8:15 p.m. to allow more time to get the reports through the assembly. That same evening, Brother José Pablo, the Superior General, intervened to redirect the goals of the Chapter. In pointing out the limits of what the Chapter could hope to achieve, he urged the capitulants to concentrate on the essentials of what it wanted to say to the Institute. An ad hoc committee would be appointed to gather together a pastoral expression of these essentials, items that would be meaningful to all sectors of the Institute, not applicable to one locality only. The committee would then draft a pastoral letter in the name of the Chapter to the Institute.⁴⁴ As for the commission reports, the Superior asked that these be left with the new General Council to refine and eventually to publish for the Institute, together with any concrete propositions from the commissions that the Chapter had approved. After a long debate, little choice was left except to agree. The plan was in fact implemented in the form of a series of five circulars published by the Council between 1977 and 1980.⁴⁵

Since the content and direction of the commission reports, as well as the 95 propositions formally voted, have been published in summaries of varying length,⁴⁶ it is not necessary to include them here. It will suffice to highlight the significance of the work of the commissions in relation to the theme of the present work, namely, the Institute in transition.

Government

The work of the Government Commission provided the basis for a thorough revision of the government structure of the Institute and, consequently, the Book of Government. The most evident change was the elimination of the office of regional Assistant and the creation of a small General Council around the Superior. More fundamental was the adoption of a new model of government structure, abandoning the pyramidal model for a circular model focused on communion and community in each administrative unit.⁴⁷

This change in perspective can be seen if one compares the structure of the Book of Government from 1967 with that of 1976. In the 1967 Book, the chapter on the Superior General is placed before the treatment of the General Council, the Visitor and his Council before the District Chapter. In the 1976 Book, the Central Government is treated before the Superior and the Vicar, the District and the District Chapter before the Visitor and his Council, the Community before the Director. The leading articles in each chapter in the 1976 Book of Government emphasize the element of communion that is reflected within the respective centers.

Young Churches

One sign of revitalization evident at the Chapter was the presence and dynamism of the Brothers representing the Young Churches. In the previous Chapter, only one native Brother had been present as a delegate, and the focus was on the missions and missionaries. In 1976 there were a significant number of indigenous delegates from Africa, Asia, and Latin American, evident in their expression, their enthusiasm, and their physiognomy. The concern shifted from the missionaries to the needs of the local Brothers and the incarnation of the Institute into local cultures and circumstances.

Community Life

The Community Life Commission took as its point of departure the varied forms of community life within the Institute, ranging from com-

munities with hardly any structure, not even a local superior, to others with most of the traditional structure intact. The attempt from the assembly floor to tip the balance in a more traditional fashion failed when amendments to legislate daily Mass and a monthly day of recollection were defeated by large margins.⁴⁸ In harmony with the approach of the Government Commission, the Commission on Community Life succeeded in putting the local community at the center of any program of renewal or revitalization. The feeling was that if revitalization does not take place in community, central authority can do very little to impose it from above. The responsibility of the community for its apostolic mission and its life of prayer was given concrete expression in the mandated annual community program. The Commission also gave unprecedented attention to the community as a source and support for the affective life of the Brother.

Mission, Formation

It might be said that the problems treated by the Mission Commission and the Formation Commission are perennial. The Mission Commission was able to advance the state of the discussion at the Institute level on topics such as the renewal of the school, apostolates outside the school, catechetics, and service of the poor. The Formation Commission could do little more than urge more aggressive programs for recruitment, improved programs and creative experimentation in initial formation, new programs in continuing formation, and an intensified effort to interest all the Brothers in growing appreciation of and commitment to their personal vocation.

Consecration

The Consecration Commission had the greatest difficulty of all. The climate for work was not improved by the unwarranted suspicion that a campaign plot was afoot to secularize the Institute, even to convert it into a secular institute.⁴⁹ The commission meetings got off to a bad start when some delegates insisted that the first order of business was to analyze the reasons for the thousands of requests for dispensations from vows over the previous ten years. When Part One of the commission report based on this analysis was presented in the assembly, it was rejected, even as a basis for discussion. It was considered too negative, too abstract and static, and totally lacking in inspiration. Part Two of the commission report fared somewhat better in its attempt to suggest practical ways to meet the problems that younger Brothers were experiencing with temporary and perpetual commitment.⁵⁰ The Chapter agreed to allow a wide variety of ways to personalize the

temporary commitment, both in its expression and duration; conditions for admission and the chapter of vows would be determined by the Districts; provision was made for dialogue between the vow chapter and the candidates. Although the requirement of a definitive commitment would be the general rule, allowance was made for exceptional cases where the Superior might allow indefinite renewal of vows or promises.⁵¹ Finally, the Commission had to report that there was not enough time to complete the study of the nomenclature,⁵² the meaning, or the obligations of the individual vows. A motion was approved to have the General Council pursue the subject further.⁵³

The fear of secularization, which had been more or less part of a hidden agenda, finally emerged into the open when a proposal was made from the floor, and reintroduced through the Commission on the final full day, to affirm the intention of the Chapter to maintain the Institute as a religious congregation of pontifical right in the canonical sense and according to Chapter I of the Rules and Constitutions. In the bitter debate that followed all of the underlying conflict came out into the open. One member of the Commission said that its purpose was to dissipate the rumors circulating in the corridors that the Institute was tending to become a secular institute. It was claimed that those who favored the resolution had only a pastoral purpose, that is, to help the Brothers resolve their doubts on the subject.

In a prepared intervention, Brother Nicet-Joseph, the former Superior, insisted that the charism of the Founder demanded a regular religious life with fixed prayers and fixed communities. He stated that our preoccupation to become a secular institute would not resolve our problems and would take us further away from the original concept of a religious life. An Italian delegate, also in a prepared statement, insisted that many Brothers could not in conscience accept the ideas in the report of the International Vow Commission, that it contained too many divergences from traditional doctrine, and that this should not be allowed to continue. A former Spanish Assistant said that we should not base our identity on historical presuppositions, for example, that the Founder did not intend the traditional religious life for the Brothers. The Commission should be guided by a total attachment to the Roman Church in its understanding of the religious life.⁵⁴

In response, Brother Michel Sauvage said that the proposition was meaningless, because the statement is already contained in the Rule and it has never been contested. Furthermore, he saw in the proposition a kind of taunt. It would be better, he said, to find other ways to renew the importance of religious life for the Brothers. Another capitulant stated unequivocally that the fear of becoming a sec-

ular institute is based on a myth, that to vote for the proposition would be to accept the myth, that the proposition would create rather than dissipate doubts and confusion.⁵⁵ Caught in the “damned if we do and damned if we don’t” situation, the assembly voted to table the motion.⁵⁶ The Chapter had just about 24 hours more before the formal closing.



40th General Chapter. Delegates from the United States and the Philippines. *Front rows:* Brothers Cassian Fyre, John Johnston, John Martin, Colman Coogan, Benildo Feliciano, Timothy Mc Carthy. *Middle rows:* Brothers David Detje, Camillus Dufresne, Luke Salm, Konrad Diebold, John Muller, Leo Kirby. *Top rows:* Brothers Raphael Willeke, Patrick Ellis, Paul Grass, William Quinn, Daniel Burke, Paul Walsh. Missing from the picture were Brothers Peter Clifford and William Harkins.

Specialized Commissions

In addition to the six working commissions, several specialized commissions or sub-commissions were charged to study specific topics that needed attention. When the Mission Commission declared itself unable and unwilling to study the question of priesthood, a special sub-commission was formed from members of other commissions to address the question. By that time, Brother Bernard Buong had arrived to take his place as alternate to the Visitor of Vietnam. He made a strong plea in the Commission to allow Brothers to be ordained as a way to preserve community life in unusual circumstances such as prevailed in his own country. The Commission disagreed, opting to reinforce the decision of 1966 affirming the exclusively lay character of the Institute. When the matter came to the floor, Brother Bernard formally moved for at least a severely restricted introduction of the priesthood. His proposal was defeated by a vote of 114 to 21.⁵⁷

The Government Sub-commission on Finance was able to have the Chapter approve the accounts of the Econome General, engage an external auditor for an annual audit, organize an international economic council with a mandate to meet twice a year, develop means for the various parts of the Institute to share resources, and set a formula to determine the Institute tax.⁵⁸

One of the more interesting and possibly prophetic commissions to report in general assembly was the so-called Mixed Commission, composed of Brothers and laymen involved in the Worldwide Confederation of Former Students of the Brothers. The report and discussion gave an opportunity to understand the impetus to develop various forms of Lasallian associations in what was beginning to be called the Lasallian Family. On that day six lay men and three women, members of one such association known as *Signum Fidei*, made a formal act of consecration during the course of the Eucharistic celebration.⁵⁹

Two special commissions had been set up to determine the fate of the normative texts voted in the previous Chapter. The Declaration had already been reaffirmed in the reports and the propositions of several commissions. The assembly accepted the proposal of the Commission on the Rule and Constitutions, headed by Brother Patrice, that the Rule and Constitutions be maintained on a tentative basis until the next Chapter.⁶⁰ The rules would remain essentially unchanged. Some specific constitutions would be altered, especially those dealing with the prayer schedule, in accordance with propositions passed during the course of the Chapter. The Commission on the Book of Government, chaired by Brother Maurice Hermans, proposed that a new postcapitular commission be appointed to produce a homogeneous

That's Us!

We're dynamic . . .
We're charismatic;
We're seldom manic,
and never static
We're debonair, comtemporaire;
Never moan, no matter what-o-phone
Will make us slog
Through dialogue
As inutile
As Fortune's wheel

In each commission, our sense of mission
Has kept us fishin'
For phrase exact:
Through mounting tensions, and interventions,
One never mentions
Our wondrous tact;
We grit our dentures for such adventures,
And court no censures,
Whate'er the fact
We're moving for'der through points of order
To reach the border, our ten year pact.

And if perchance, a *cause du quelque mal*,
We slumber through three days' proces verbals,
Be sure we never, never ever shall
Entrer dans discution sans nos epines dorsales.

—Fragment considered to be of little consequence found after
the partitioning of the sous sol of the salle des pas perdus.

40th General Chapter. At a festal dinner honoring the retirement of Brothers Charles Henry and Leo Kirby, the US Delegates manage to capture in verse some of the clichés and even some of the frustrations of the Chapter experience.

and definitive version of the Rule and Constitutions and the Book of Government. A draft was to be sent to all the capitulants within six months with instructions to return their observations to the General Council within ten days. The Council would then approve the final version. The resolution was accepted, with an amendment requiring that the capitulants return a formal "yes" or "no" vote on the total Draft.⁶¹

During the discussion of the Book of Government at the evening meeting of June 18, only hours before the Chapter was due to close, one capitulant protested that the Commission had betrayed a tradition by failing to include a separate chapter on the Brother Director. In vain did the Commission reply that after long reflection it seemed preferable to incorporate the articles on the Director within the chapter on the Community. The Brother held his ground and formally moved that a chapter on the Director be included in the Book of Government to incorporate all the elements necessary to help him in a concrete way fulfill his service at the heart of the community. The motion passed 77 to 43, with 13 abstentions. On the following day, at the closing session, the legality of the procedure was challenged, but a motion to reconsider was defeated 70 to 55.⁶² This was the last bit of business to be treated by the Chapter.

Formal Closing Ceremonies

One of the events that might be considered part of the closing was the audience with Pope Paul VI on Wednesday, June 16. Unlike the arrangement at the previous Chapter, a private audience was not possible. The capitulants and the Brothers resident in the generalate were given, instead, seats in the front rows of the regular Wednesday audience. In the course of his allocution, the Pope singled out the Brothers and addressed some words of exhortation to encourage them in their vocation.⁶³

At 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 19, after a break following the last business meeting, Brother Pablo, the Superior, delivered an extended address to the assembled delegates. He emphasized that revitalization and renewal cannot come from propositions and documents but only through the Holy Spirit leading the Brothers to live in Christ and in the Church. By our vocation, he said, we are signs of faith, signs of hope, and signs of Christian love; we should leave the Chapter with a renewed sense of fidelity to the local church and to the universal Church. He concluded by citing the words of John F. Kennedy, "Don't ask what your country can do for you . . . ," and applied them to the capitulants on their return to the Brothers who were wait-

ing to see what their delegates were going to do for the revitalization of the Institute.⁶⁴

The Superior's address, the formal acts of the closing of the Chapter, signed by each of the capitulants, and a celebratory Eucharist brought the very difficult and sometimes contentious 40th General Chapter to an end on a note of solidarity and hope.

Notes

1. The French term for each individual sitting or meeting is *séance*, which transliterated literally into English has another meaning. "Session," both in French and English technically refers to an entire series of meetings without adjournment. Thus there were two "sessions" of the 39th General Chapter and only one session for the 40th. The word "meeting" will be used henceforth to translate *séance*, that is, a sitting in general assembly, usually of about 45 minutes in duration.

2. *Chronique du XLe Chapitre Général* in AMG. Frère Benoît Marcoux was the Chronicler. His account is peppered with similar amusing asides.

3. Among the missing were the two delegates from the Central States, Brothers James Gaffney and Konrad Diebold, who were caught in London unable to get a flight to Rome. They arrived by overnight train in time for the 11:00 a.m. session on Holy Thursday. *Procès-verbal* for the 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. sessions of April 15. Since the official French minutes (*procès-verbal*) for the first meetings are not otherwise numbered, they will be cited simply as PV with the date until the numbering begins with the ninth meeting, that of April 19 at 4:00 p.m., designated as PV R/09. In the meeting of April 16 at 11:00 a.m. it was decided not to identify by name the speakers from the floor. A complete set of the minutes, with marginal notes by the author, including the occasional identification of the speaker quoted, can be found in ANYD.

4. As one of the ten elected repeaters, the author had the sense, as the Chapter progressed, or failed to progress, that many of the delegates had not only not been involved in the previous Chapter but that they had not understood, or absorbed, and in some cases seemed not even to have read the important documents from 1967.

5. The four groups were French, English, Spanish, and "other languages." The fourth group found it impossible to agree on one language as a vehicle of communication or a basis of representation. This group eventually succeeded in having the monitors chosen on the basis of cultures rather than languages.

6. During the discussion of the report of the Preparatory Commission, the author had the distinct impression that the tension and rivalry that had developed within the General Council during the previous ten years was reflected in the fear of subjectivism and other reservations to the report expressed by some of the delegates. The fear was that there was a plot by the leadership of the French and Americans to secularize the Institute. This unwarranted conclusion seems to have been based on the emphasis put by the French scholars on the fact that the Founder did not allow the Brothers to take the vows of religion and perhaps did not intend to found a religious congregation in the canonical sense. The leaders of the Spanish and British

groups disputed this interpretation of the Founder's intent. Thus, when it was announced that the discernment on the Founder would be led by three formal presentations, one Brother Assistant asked that the presenters be identified: Brothers Michel Sauvage, Maurice-Auguste, and John Johnston. Since that Assistant knew perfectly well who the speakers would be, this seemed to be his way of alerting the assembly to be wary of the French-American influence.

7. Five candidates emerged on the first ballot, three on the second. On the third ballot Brother James Feehan was elected with 81 votes. Brother William Quinn got 70 votes. PV for April 16, 11:00 a.m. meeting.

8. The other nominee was Brother Leo Barrington from London. In his Chronicle Brother Marcoux complains that the nominees for this office had not been consulted. There was no real definition of the task of the Chronicler, and the Chronicle from the 39th General Chapter that might have served as a model was not to be found in the archives. *Chronique* in AMG.

9. PV for April 17, 9:00 a.m. meeting.

10. For example, a long debate over the inclusion of the word "nevertheless" (*toutefois*) in the article excluding experts but allowing the possibility that the Chapter could invite them if needed. Other examples were the debates over the length of time allowed for oral interventions 3 minutes won over 5 and written interventions 5 minutes won over 10; a suggestion that an abstention be considered as a negative vote (rejected). A more substantive debate emerged over the majority required to amend the constitutions. In this debate some of the division of thought in the General Council (legal restriction vs. change, which became concrete in Spanish vs. French) became apparent. One of the regional Assistants succeeded in having the rules amended to require a 2/3 vote to change any of the constitutions or the articles in the Book of Government. The Assistant for Formation pointed out that this contradicted the Book of Government itself, which required only a simple majority to amend. The vote was brought back for reconsideration, and it was eventually voted to leave the original text in place pending further clarification when the texts of the normative documents would be presented for vote. PV for April 19 at 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (Beginning with the latter set of minutes coded as R/09, the *procès-verbal* would henceforth be numbered in sequence and will be so cited hereafter.)

11. *Chronique* for April 19 in AMG.

12. A brief summary of each of these reports is given by Brother Manuel Olivé in his highly personalized account in the Institute Bulletin (Number 218, vol. 56:3), devoted entirely to the Chapter and presented as a sort of personal diary. Brother Manuel was not a delegate, but was in charge of the Press Bureau of the Chapter. The author has reason to disagree with some of his interpretations of the events and movements in the Chapter.

13. It is not surprising that the report of Brother Leo Kirby (United States), stressing signs of hope despite the problems, was the most optimistic. The reports of Brother Patrice Marey (France) and Bernard Merrian (French Missions) were the most pessimistic. Brother Patrice even reported that it was being questioned by some whether the Institute could survive. In most of Brother Merrian's region there were few Christians, no possibility of vocations, with the work of the Institute reduced to a small Christian presence in an alien religious culture.

14. The author was informed by some of his friends from another delegation that their Assistant was rarely present in the region and that the facts in his report were a couple of years out of date. When asked by the author

whether the Brothers in Latin America were interested in Liberation Theology, the Assistant replied that this movement was based on Marxism and of no concern to the young Brothers. (See the PV R/12 for April 20.) After the meeting, several delegates from that region assured the author that the case was otherwise.

15. For example, the American Assistant was challenged about attendance at daily Eucharist, the English Assistant was asked by a Polish Brother why the British considered religion not a fit subject for conversation, the Italian Assistant was asked why the native Brothers from Ethiopia were not represented, the Spanish Assistant was asked about the tension between personal preference and community apostolates, the South American Assistant was pushed on the conflict between the service of the poor and the tradition of schools for the rich, the Asian Assistant was questioned on the slow process of implementing subsidiarity, the Assistant for Formation was asked about the areas of conflict with territorial Assistants in determining formation policy. The minutes (PV R/10-R/17) provide documentation along with many other examples.

16. At the beginning of the discussion, Brother Pablo, Vicar General, made this motion that "in view of the quality of the report and of the person who presented it, a copy of the report be sent to every community of the Institute, by airmail if necessary." The applause was interpreted in the minutes as a unanimous vote. The Superior, however, intervened to say that he abstained from the vote since before the report could be published it would have to be annotated to credit the various sources from which much of it was derived. PV R/19. The author is not aware that published copies were ever sent to the communities as the Vicar suggested. The capitulants were given copies of the talk in advance in either English, French, or Spanish. A rather complete summary (without footnotes or citation of sources) was published in Bulletin #218.

17. The source is the work of Raymond Hostie, *Vie et Mort des Ordres Religieux*, published by Desclée in 1972. This work was brought to the attention of American readers by an article by Raymond Fitz and Lawrence Cada, "Recovery of Religious Life," in *Review for Religious* 34 (1975-76) that would have been available to the Superior. Hostie's analysis was popularized among the Brothers in the United States by Martin Helldorfer, FSC, most notably in the article prepared for the 1981 Spirituality Seminar at Narragansett and published under the title "Brothers of the Christian Schools: Will We Live or Will We Die?" in *A Time to Live*, T. McCarthy, ed. (Romeville 1981).

18. As noted above, the best available published summary can be found in the Institute Bulletin #218.

19. Summaries of the questions and responses can be found in both the official minutes, PV R/19, and the Bulletin of the Institute #218.

20. Brother David Detje, delegate from the LI-NE District, has extended notes on this session, now in ANYD.

21. Duly noted in the minutes of April 28, PV R/25, and in Bulletin #218, p. 28, which erroneously puts this on May 3. The author has a vivid memory of the almost continual overcast and rain and the impact on spirits already dampened by the excessive talk, the nit-picking, and the slow pace of the Chapter.

22. See Brother David Detje's notes in ANYD for a fuller report of this meeting.

23. A four-page double-spaced summary of the presentation is attached to the official minutes. PV R/26.

24. There is more in these responses than meets the eye. Brother Sagastagoita's remarks reflect the opposition, prevalent among the Spanish Brothers, to Brother Maurice's interpretation of the Founder's intent concerning the vows of religion and canonical status for the Institute. The French interpretation stresses the originality of the Founder's creation and the original vows as an expression of the apostolic finality of the Institute. In the Spanish view, the Founder intended all along to found a religious institute in the canonical sense, to seek papal approval for it, and to have the Brothers take the three traditional vows of religion as an expression of the priority of the religious life over apostolic mission. In itself, the disagreement is understandable and there is both evidence and lack of evidence for each of the interpretations. What is unfortunate is the suspicion this created that there was a calculated plot on the part of the French to transform the Institute into a secular institute. The suggestion that the vows of religion might be replaced by the original vow of association was interpreted (wrongly) as a stage in this process. See note 49, below.

25. There was an amusing aspect to this exchange that is not reported in the minutes. As part of his plea for the wearing of the habit, the Polish Brother pointed out that it was ironical for Brother Maurice to make a presentation on the Founder's memoir on the habit, while he himself was dressed in a suit and turtleneck. Brother Maurice quickly replied that the habit the Brother was wearing was not at all the habit worn by the early Brothers, especially since his white rabat was merely attached to the kind of pleated cassock the Polish clergy wore.

26. Brother Jaume, one of the younger delegates to the Chapter, was seated directly in front of the author in the chapter hall. The two had several whispered exchanges as to how to bring the concerns of the younger Brothers to the attention of the delegates, many of whom seemed far removed from the concerns of the young men under their charge. Brother Jaume has since served the Institute remarkably as Director of the CIL (and before that of its regional counterpart in Spain) and has managed, besides, to author several books on creative approaches to religious life.

27. A five-page double-spaced summary of this presentation was distributed to the capitulants. Copy in ANYD, John Muller collection.

28. The minutes contain summaries of the responses to Brother Michel's talk. PV R/28. The intervention of Brother John Muller was omitted from the minutes of April 30 and had to be added by way of amendment on May 3. PV R/30.

29. A rather thorough summary of almost two pages, single-spaced, can be found in the minutes for May 1. PV R/29. A copy of the complete English text is in ANYD. There can be no doubt that in this presentation a new Lasalian voice came to the attention of the Institute, and that it was a major factor in the emergence of Brother John as a candidate for high office once the elections were underway.

30. Minutes for May 1. PV R/29.

31. One delegate confided to the author that a group of younger delegates, finding this tedious and overdrawn, cut out of the procession. For them, the morning prayer in language groups had more meaning and was more conducive to a prayerful discernment.

32. This shows that the old question of priority between apostolic mission (the French emphasis) and religious consecration (the Spanish emphasis) was far from resolved, in spite of the insistence in the Declaration on integrating both elements, the one with the other and with community.

33. That is the total noted by Brother John Muller in his diary. The diary, as well as copies of the printed lists, are in ANYD, John Muller collection.

34. An acronym for *Service de Cooperation Lasallienne Internationale*, based in the Rome generalate.

35. At issue was a long-standing conflict between Brother Raphael Martinez, Assistant, and the two Assistants General, Maurice Hermans and Michel Sauvage. Brother Raphael moved to amend the rules so that any change in the Rule and Constitutions would require a 2/3 majority. Brother Maurice urged that the procedural rule be left intact, since it corresponded to the Book of Government, which required only a simple majority to amend the Constitutions. The amendment passed 105 to 33. In the meeting that followed, Brother Michel demanded to know whether the Chapter by this action had, in effect changed the Book of Government. The significance of the vote is that the conservative forces seemed determined to make it difficult to change constitutions where duties such as specific times for prayer and the obligations of the vows were spelled out in detail. As it turned out, many of these constitutions were indeed changed by majority votes well over the 2/3 required.

36. This was especially apparent in the occasional and noisy birthday celebrations held near the end of the morning meeting. Since the Community Commission met in the room adjacent to the Consecration Commission, the contrast between the two Commissions was the more apparent, at least to the author, who was a member of the sharply divided and somber Commission on Consecration.

37. Meeting prior to the Chapter, the delegates from the United States had decided not to propose an American candidate nor to endorse collectively any other candidate for the office. During the Chapter, as the elections drew near, the author was approached by a French delegate in the hope that there might be found a strong candidate to rally the support of those who, for one reason or another, preferred an alternate to the Brother Vicar. This proved impossible. Many Americans, but not all, had already expressed support for the Vicar. Most of the French might have proffered someone else, but could not agree on one candidate, much less one who could win wide support from other groups within the Chapter. The eventual outcome shows that there was no such candidate.

38. Reported in PV R/55 and in Bulletin #218, pp. 34-36.

39. Book of Government, Chapter 3, "The Central Government," article 26.

40. The complete tally is among the author's notes in ANYD. It is of no great historical interest to report that on this occasion the author received three votes.

41. There were two ballots during each "round." During the second round Brother Ambrose Payne from Australia, who was not a delegate and not present at the Chapter but had been a member of the Preparatory Commission, had a plurality of the votes. When the Brother was contacted by phone, he asked that his name be withdrawn from consideration. It is humbling to report that on the final round, along with 8 other candidates, the author received one vote. PV R/65.

42. The vote was 80 for Johnston and 53 for Marey. PV R/65.

43. The delays were a matter of special concern to some of the delegates from the United States, anxious for a variety of reasons to return home. Some had urgent business awaiting them; others feared a Communist takeover in Italy as a result of elections scheduled for mid-June. One delegate, gifted with a vivid imagination and capable of articulating it, envisioned a scenario where all the delegates from capitalist countries might be detained in a concentration camp. The same delegate compared some of the complicated proposals to hiring a jet airplane to get across the street.

44. Eventually, the Commission decided to urge each of the capitulants to pledge himself to use every available and appropriate means to bring the message and the achievements of the Chapter to the Brothers of the Districts who elected them. A solemn pledge to that effect, pronounced together by the delegates, was incorporated into the Eucharistic liturgy celebrating the close of the Chapter. The text is in Bulletin #218, p. 49.

45. Circular 405, *The Fostering of Vocations—Formation*, May 15, 1977; Circular 406, *Our Consecrated Life*, December 25, 1977; Circular 408, *Our Mission—The Institute in the Young Churches*, June 29, 1978; Circular 410, *Community Life*, April 30, 1979; Circular 412, *Educational Service of the Poor and Promotion of Justice*, September 15, 1980. The publication of the Book of Government obviated the need for a distinct circular on the work of that Commission.

46. There is a brief summary in Bulletin #218, p. 43. An official summary of the reports and the text of all the voted propositions can be found in Circular 403, *40th General Chapter*, October 1976. Copies of the original reports as distributed and approved by the assembly are in ANYD.

47. There was a certain amount of resistance to this model in the Government Commission, where there was heavy representation from the United States: Brothers Paul Grass, John Muller, Peter Clifford, and William Harkins. Even then some of the more liberal French-speaking delegates needed reassurance that the Americans were not trying to restructure the Institute as a political democracy on the American model.

48. The proposal on daily Mass failed by a narrow margin: 73 voted in favor, 70 against, but the 4 abstentions and 1 *juxta modum* vote kept the affirmative vote from constituting a majority. The decision on a monthly day of recollection was more decisive: 36 in favor, 95 against. PV R/70. These amendments in matters of specifics and the support they received revealed a tendency among some in the assembly to mistrust the principle that the community was responsible to determine its own life within some general guidelines.

49. This unfair rumor was already circulating during the previous Chapter despite the extensive treatment given to religious consecration in the Declaration and the Rule. The idea of a plot or campaign to secularize was kept alive in the General Council in the intercapitular period and was the source of misinterpretation and much of the tension in that body. The very tentative suggestion of the International Vow Committee that the original vow of association might well embody all of the values inherent in the traditional vows of religion was misinterpreted in the same sense. It was evident from the beginning of the Chapter that this suspicion had been insinuated into the minds of some delegates. As a result, to discuss consecration as anything different from a fixed and structured religious life defined by the three vows of religion and their obligations was interpreted as support for a change in the canonical

status of the Institute. The situation was not helped by the fact that the opposing sides were for the most part divided along national and cultural lines, mostly Spanish-speaking against French-speaking, with influential voices from other cultures, for example, the Americans in general and the author in particular, trying to find a common ground and basis for compromise.

50. The editor of Bulletin #218, who was neither a member of the Consecration Commission nor a delegate, offers his own strange comment, derived no doubt from one of the currents prevailing among his fellow nationals. He writes: "Certain very curious things have been said, quite inexplicable and not in the least corresponding with reality. It has been said that the young Brothers, a generalization, find difficulty in accepting the vows, especially perpetual vows . . . [dots in the text] and who should make such an affirmation but those coming from countries where there are no young Brothers to prove it" (p. 42). This is an unwarranted slap from a Spanish source aimed at the attempt of the French leadership to urge a serious re-examination of the vow structure. The evidence the Commission received concerning the young Brothers came from many parts of the Institute, not least the United States where there were at the time large numbers of young Brothers, many of them expressing these very concerns. The remainder of the comments by the editor of the Bulletin on this subject are equally moralistic and judgmental. A more balanced and ultimately positive account of the work of this Commission was presented the following September at the meeting of the US Visitors by Brother Colman Coogan, Visitor of Baltimore, who was a member of the Commission. Copy in ANYD, John Muller collection.

51. The Congregation for Religious subsequently refused to allow the provision for exceptions to the requirement for a definitive commitment.

52. In particular, the possibility of renaming the vow of poverty in terms of sharing was under study in a sub-commission, as were also the status and interpretation of the special vows.

53. It is the opinion of the author that, just as time was running out, the Commission was getting close to the possibility of a rapprochement both on the basic issues and on some of the other questions left unresolved. The general agreement within the Commission on a more open approach to the legal requirements for temporary and definitive commitment is evident of a trend toward a common ground. It is the opinion of the author that Circular 406 entitled *Our Consecrated Life*, except for the historical essay by Brother Maurice Hermans, sidesteps the fundamental issues at the heart of the Commission discussions and settles instead for pastoral and psychological exhortations addressed to the Brothers.

54. In the view of the author, these interventions seem not to have been directed to the motion affirming the status of the Institute, but rather the opposite. It is almost as if there were a motion on the floor to have the Institute become a secular Institute.

55. The interventions are summarized in the minutes. PV R/90. The speakers are not identified in the text but the set of minutes kept by the author has the more important speakers identified in marginal notes. Copy in ANYD. Also, for clarity in the narrative, the author has here rearranged the sequence of the interventions.

56. The motion to table passed only by a vote of 72 to 65. PV R/90. This could be interpreted to show how strong was the need for reassurance in the matter of becoming a secular institute.

57. If any persuasion was needed, one of the French Brothers described how it might have been possible for them in a similar emergency situation during World War II to keep their communities together if they had opted for the priesthood. They preferred instead to remain true to the traditions of the Institute. As a result they were forced to work in the mines and gather surreptitiously after work to keep the spirit of community. The Brothers in Vietnam, he thought, ought to be capable of some similar sacrifice. Brother Guillermo Felix, a former Assistant, argued that the positive side of the rejection of the priesthood was the opportunity it gave the Institute to work for the advancement of the laity in the Church. Shortly after the Chapter, Brother Bernard Buong, discouraged by the result of the vote, left the Institute to seek ordination.

58. See Propositions 86–90 in Circular 403.

59. This is extensively reported in Bulletin #218. Brother Manuel Olivé, the editor, had been deeply involved in the movement in Spain and presided at the session.

60. This option was offered in the post-Vatican II decree *Ecclesiae Sanctae*. In the light of subsequent events, a new pontificate and the promulgation of a new Code of Canon Law prior to the Chapter of 1986, it was providential that the Chapter took this option.

61. The amendment was proposed by Brother Peter Clifford, a member of the Government Commission. His concern that the Roman Commission might not adequately represent the intent of the Chapter Commission proved to be well founded. When the draft arrived in September, the American delegates, who had been a major influence in the Commission, found the organization of the draft a betrayal of what the Chapter had voted. The Roman Commission, using the 1967 Book of Government as a base, had merely added or changed isolated articles passed by the Chapter. The Chapter's approval of community as a structural basis had been betrayed by burying the relevant articles within the text of each section instead of placing those articles at the head of each section to set an interpretation and tone for all that followed. A representative group of the US delegates, including Brother Charles Henry and Brother Paul Grass, who had been Chairman of the Commission, met in Romeville during the Thanksgiving holidays to make a thorough review of the draft and reorganize it according to the expressed intent of the Chapter. Fortunately, the revised version was accepted in Rome. An authoritative English translation appeared shortly thereafter with the Rule and Constitutions and the Book of Government in a single volume for the first time in the same format as the French text. Brother Paul Grass prepared the translation of the Book of Government, while Brothers Augustine Loes and Luke Salm, translators of the 1967 Rule, reworked the translation to incorporate the few changes in the Rule and Constitutions. All three shared the work of editing. The process is described in a note at the end of the American edition published at Romeville in January 1978.

62. The last remark in the handwritten minutes for the meeting of June 19 reads, "*Hereusement et opportunement . . . l'heure est arrivée. On peut . . . en sortir.*" ("Happily and just in time . . . the time was up. And we can get out of here.") Dots in the original, PV R/94.

63. The text is reproduced together with some pictures in Bulletin #218, pp. 44–45.

64. The complete text is in Bulletin #218, pp. 46–49.

8

The 41st General Chapter (1986)

The Intercapitular Period (1976–1986)

Compared to the previous ten years, the period between the 40th and the 41st General Chapters was relatively serene. Consequently, some progress was made towards the revitalization that was the goal and expectation of the Chapter of 1976. The less cumbersome General Council was remarkably successful in doing the many complicated and sometimes contradictory things that were expected of it. The new councilors did manage to surround the Superior with a cohesive and fraternal community distinct from the central community at the generalate. They took meals in a dining room apart and established a regular rhythm of shared prayer and small Eucharistic celebrations. The Chapter had also mandated the Council to review the commission documents and publish them in final form for the Institute. This was done in a series of circulars issued over a three-year period.¹

Having eliminated the office of Regional Assistant, the Chapter demanded that the General Council maintain contact with the Districts. A plan was established for the Council members to visit with the Superior all the sectors of the Institute “as a community” in groups of two or three. Since these extended absences made it difficult to maintain the Council as a continuing community at the center, the officers of the general services based in Rome were incorporated into the community of the General Council. The Council also arranged for reciprocal visits to the center by Brother Visitors in regional groupings.

During the intercapitular period, some striking events in the life of the Church had their inevitable effect on the Institute. In 1978 Pope Paul VI died and was succeeded in turn by John Paul I and John Paul II. In 1983 the new Code of Canon Law was published with important changes in the canons governing religious institutes.² In addition to the new Code, there were significant changes in the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. The amiable and rather progressive Cardinal Eduardo Peronio was replaced as prefect of the Congregation by Cardinal Jerome Hamer, who had been an associate of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Both Cardinals Peronio and Hamer were good friends and former students of the Brothers, but Hamer, a Dominican, was known to represent a more structured and traditional approach to religious life. This new trend soon became apparent with the publication in 1983 of the

Congregation's document, *Essential Elements in Religious Life*. More detailed and restrictive than the new Code, this text would prove to be the norm by which the rules of religious institutes submitted for approval would be judged.

Meanwhile, the year 1980 was chosen to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of the Institute by Saint John Baptist de La Salle.³ The full year of celebrations worldwide opened on May 15, 1980, in Rome with a solemn Eucharist in the chapel of the generalate, followed by a gathering of more than 6,000 Lasallians from all over the world in the Paul VI hall at the Vatican, where the Pope usually holds his public audiences. The most important international event celebrating the tercentenary was the Seventh Lasallian World Congress held in Paris in July 1980. Particularly impressive was the gathering at Parménie⁴ during that same month of more than a thousand young people from all over Europe.⁵ Similar celebrations in the form of impressive liturgical, academic, and educational gatherings were held during the tercentennial year in Lasallian centers all over the world. The year of celebration came to an end on November 21, 1981 when Pope John Paul II visited the *Casa generalizia*.⁶

The intercapitular meeting of all the Visitors was held in 1981 as required by the Book of Government. During the meeting the Visitors, with the Superior and his Council, were able to address some topics, either new or given a new emphasis. These included accent in ministry on a pastoral attitude, appeal to the poor, openness to lay people and the Young Churches; the annual program, simplicity and accountability, the role of the Director, and the need for affectivity in community life; the startling facts of the vocation crisis and the search for solutions; the need to strengthen the organism of leadership with emphasis on the General Council and the region.⁷ The special concern in the meeting with formation and recruitment led to the establishment of a working group of councilors and experts to study these problems in depth. The conclusions reached in the study were published in a special Institute Circular devoted to the topic of formation.⁸

The Institute experienced a great loss during this period with the death of Brother Charles Henry on December 16, 1982. He had suffered a stroke two years before, from which he never completely recovered. Brother José Pablo, his successor as Superior General, paid a warm tribute to his memory in the official notice to the Institute,⁹ with special and realistic attention to the difficult years after 1967. The funeral was held in Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York with Cardinal Cooke presiding. Both Brother Pablo, the Superior, and Brother John Johnston, the Vicar, attended, together with a large congregation of Brothers and admirers. Toward the end of the long liturgy, Brother

Leo Kirby delivered a moving and descriptive eulogy,¹⁰ to which Cardinal Cooke added some words of appreciation of his own. Burial was in the Brothers' cemetery on the property of the Provinciate in Narragansett, Rhode Island. It might be said, in this book entitled *A Religious Institute in Transition*, that no other person did as much as Brother Charles Henry to steer the Institute with firmness and understanding through the difficult period of transition that he helped to set in motion.

The intercapitular period was marked by two other events that helped to give the generalate of Brother Pablo a more affirmative and optimistic aura than that of Brother Charles Henry. In October 1984, Brother Miguel Febres Cordero, a scholarly and saintly Brother from Ecuador, was canonized by Pope John Paul II in a solemn ceremony in Saint Peter's Basilica.¹¹ In July 1984, Mexico hosted the World Congress of Lasallian Associations, giving the western hemisphere the opportunity to witness the force and vitality of the growing Lasallian Family movement.¹²

The International Rules Commission

As recounted earlier, the 1976 Chapter opted to maintain the Rule on an experimental basis and to delay its submission for definitive Vatican approval until the following Chapter. Accordingly, in July 1982, the Superior launched an Institute-wide review of the Rule and Constitutions. Each District was asked to establish a procedure for reviewing the current text, article by article, and suggesting whatever revisions the experience since 1967 might indicate. A standardized form was provided. The suggestions were then to be sent to Rome where an in-house commission was appointed to sort out the replies according to language and subject matter. In this process some 4,000 specific observations were received from throughout the Institute.¹³

In 1984 an international commission was appointed with a mandate to prepare a redaction of the text of the Rule,¹⁴ to be submitted to the forthcoming Chapter for discussion, amendment, and approval. Only then could the Rule be submitted for definitive approval by the Congregation for Religious (CRIS). In September 1984, the eight members of the Commission took up residence in the Rome generalate where they spent the next nine months bringing to birth a draft text of the Rule.¹⁵

Although many on the Commission might have preferred to leave the Rule and Constitutions from 1967 and 1976 more or less intact, the provisions of the new Code of Canon Law made that impossible. The

very terminology of Rule and Constitutions had to be abandoned. In the Institute, the Rule (or the "Rules") had always been the fundamental document. Since 1966, the term "constitutions" had referred to the specific and universal applications of the principles contained in the Rule. Now the Institute had to conform to the more usual terminology that designated the basic document as the Constitutions. These alone were to be submitted for Vatican approval. Canon Law left the institutes free to develop "other codes" as part of their "particular law" to be designated by a terminology of choice. Eventually, the terminology suggested by the Rule Commission and adopted by the Chapter called the total text the Rule, composed of the fundamental code called Constitutions, as required, and the particularized articles known as statutes.

Beyond the question of nomenclature, more substantial alterations had to be made to the existing texts. The Code explicitly states that the Constitutions must contain both spiritual and juridical elements. Among the juridical elements to be included are the structures of government, the religious discipline to be observed, the requirements for admission, the program of formation, and the obligations of the sacred bonds. In the Lasallian Institute most of this legislation was to be found in the Book of Government. This meant that the Rule Commission had to compress into one manageable text the contents of the 11 chapters of the current Rule, including the respective constitutions, as well as the 287 articles of the Book of Government.

Another difficulty with the current Rule surfaced when the attention of the Commission was brought to a comparative study made of the post-Vatican Rules of the ten members of the French *Union des Frères Enseignants*.¹⁶ The report shows that for all practical purposes the normative texts of the various institutes were the same, with the same structure, the same vocabulary (reflecting Vatican II theology), and the same inspirational tone. There was very little to differentiate the Rule of one institute from that of another. This came as a bit of a shock to the members of the Rule Commission. From then on, they made a conscious attempt to incorporate into the Rule as much as possible of the vocabulary and the unique vision of John Baptist de La Salle.

It did not take the Commission very long to decide that the new text could best be organized in ten chapters: five on the Vocation of the Brother (Finality, Mission, Consecration, Community, Prayer), three on Government (General Chapter, Central Government, District and Region), and two on the Future of the Institute (Formation and Vitality). It was agreed that the redaction of the text would be guided by four principles: the point of departure would be the Rule and Con-

stitutions of 1967 as modified in 1976; account would be taken of the notes sent by the Brothers; the Rule would be made more distinctively Lasallian; a shorter and simplified text would be prepared to meet the demands of the new Code of Canon Law.¹⁷

The ten chapters were parceled out among the eight members of the Commission, who were asked to prepare working texts which would then be discussed in common and at length with a view to producing a draft text of the entire Rule. Then the projected text would be subject to review in the light of the guiding principles. By Christmas time the draft text had undergone three revisions;¹⁸ a fourth and final revision was ready in the early spring of 1985 to be submitted for review and dialogue with the General Council. The meetings between the Council and the Commission were fruitful, bringing together two rather different sets of perspectives.¹⁹ After almost a month of continual meetings, most of the disputed points were resolved²⁰ and the project was ready to be sent to the Institute in the name of the Council and the Commission. In the tradition of the Founder, the draft text (*Projet* in French) would provide all the Brothers worldwide with the opportunity for input into the text to be voted by the Chapter. Translations into English and Spanish were prepared by members of the Commission to assure fidelity to the French text.

Convocation and Preparation for the Chapter

The circular formally convoking the 41st General Chapter was issued on April 7, 1985,²¹ the anniversary of the death of the Founder. In view of the difficulties with the large number of delegates at the previous Chapter, as well as the declining numbers in the Institute,²² the number of capitulants was fixed at 116, with only 8 of them members by right. This figure compares remarkably with 1966, when there were 48 *ex officio* delegates, and 1976, when there were 18. The regional balance was also much better: Spain would have 16 delegates, France 16, the rest of Europe 18, United States and Toronto 15, Latin America 15, Asia and Africa 14. The five Districts of the Institute with more than 280 Brothers were to have three delegates in the forthcoming Chapter, Districts with between 140 and 280 Brothers were to elect two delegates, every other District and delegation would be entitled to be represented by one delegate. Of the English-speaking Districts, only New York would have three delegates; Australia, Baltimore, Ireland, New Orleans-Santa Fe, San Francisco, and LI-NE would have two; the others, one. October 1, 1985 was set as the date for the election of delegates to be completed.

The Superior's letter of May 15, 1983 had included a list of topics which he asked the Brothers to rate in the order of importance. A year later Circular 419 enumerated the fifteen broad topics that the Brothers considered most important, together with a listing of related and specific issues that the entire Institute might begin to study in preparation for the Chapter.²³ In addition, the General Council had commissioned a number of special studies for the use of the delegates on subjects such as the Young Churches, the ministry of the Brother, Lasallian Associations, aging Districts, and the presence of the Brothers in Islamic and Buddhist countries. The topic needing the most serious attention was the preparation of a definitive text of the Rule. The circular promised that each elected capitulant and each community in the Institute would receive a copy of the Draft Rule that was then nearing completion.

Meanwhile the Preparatory Commission had also been appointed. Its members were to be Brothers Angel Cirera, Spanish, and Director of the Rome motherhouse; Hervé Danielou, French, who was elected Chairman; Armand Gameau, Canadian, who subsequently became Visitor and was replaced by Michael Jacques, former Asian Assistant; Leonard Leduc, Canadian, and Secretary General; Francisco de Cervantes, Mexican; Mark Murphy, then Auxiliary Visitor of San Francisco; and Gerard Rummery, Australian and the Director of CIL.²⁴

The Preparatory Commission arrived in Rome for its first meetings shortly before the arrival of the Rule Commission. This timing provided the opportunity for a series of joint meetings of the two Commissions during September and October 1984 to prevent any premature attempt to determine the way the Chapter might address the study of the Rule.²⁵ In all of its preparation, however, the Preparatory Commission acted on the presumption that the study of the Rule would be the central axis of the Chapter. Enlightened by the long delays experienced at the previous Chapter, the Preparatory Commission prepared a handbook for the capitulants. The handbook provided some helpful background material, outlined the general and specific objectives of the Chapter, set a tentative timetable to allow adequate time for the work, suggested Rules of Procedure modeled on previous Chapters, and made provision for some days of discernment, the study of the Rule, and work in commissions. A draft of the handbook was sent to the capitulants some months before the Chapter and later revised according to the responses from the capitulants.²⁶

Following the custom begun in 1966, the elected delegates from the United States and Toronto region scheduled a series of meetings to plan for an active and informed participation in the upcoming

Chapter. Elected to represent their respective Districts were Brothers Thomas Caldwell and Benedict Oliver from Baltimore; James Gaffney from Chicago; Peter Clifford and Timothy Balfe from LI-NE; Raphael Bodin and Wayne Viguerie from New Orleans-Santa Fe; Timothy Wentworth, Jerome Sullivan, and Luke Salm from New York; Paul McDonough from Saint Louis; Dominic Ehrmantraut from Saint Paul-Minneapolis; Norman Cook and Mark Murphy from San Francisco; and Frank McCrea from Toronto. At the first meeting, held at Romeoville on November 16 and 17, 1985, Brother James Gaffney was elected to chair the delegation. A second meeting was held at Christian Brothers College in Memphis during the following January to discuss, among other things, some communications concerning preparations for the Chapter from Brother Mark Murphy, a member of the Preparatory Commission meeting in Rome.

These meetings provided the new delegates with an opportunity to become familiar with the workings of a General Chapter. There was time, also, to raise and discuss the principal issues. The draft of the new Rule provoked considerable interest, especially the disputed points on regional organization, the interval between Chapters, and the functioning of the General Council. Attention was also given to the broader challenges facing the Institute: declining numbers, the vocation crisis, the Institute in third world countries, the problems of small Districts, sub-Districts, and delegations. Possible candidates for the office of Superior General were discussed. There was strong but not unanimous support for Brother John Johnston, with the understanding that the delegates would be open to any qualified candidate who might emerge. Considerable attention was given to an Institute-wide report on ministry that was being prepared for the Chapter, especially the section dealing with the United States and Toronto region. Finally, a matter of some concern to the delegates was the not altogether favorable image of the American Brother in other sectors of the Institute, especially Latin America,²⁷ and what might be done to improve it.²⁸

A suggestion, first proposed in 1966, that the elected delegates from the region should meet with other regional groups finally became a reality in February 1986 at Miami, where a group of selected United States and Toronto delegates met with the representatives from the Latin American Visitors Conference (RELAL) and Canada. Present at the meeting were Brother Adalberto Aranda, Visitor of South Mexico and President of RELAL; the Visitors of Bogota, Antilles, Medellin, Venezuela, and North Mexico; the Visitors of the four Districts in French-speaking Canada; and seven of the United States and Toronto

delegates, with Brothers Paul Walsh and Amedy Esquibel to act as translators. The three days together gave the participants an opportunity to become familiar with the similarities and differences among the viewpoints represented on matters such as the text of the Draft Rule, candidates for high office, and the relation of central government to the regions. Special attention was given to the various forms of Lasalian association (not very far advanced in the United States), and the need for better collaboration between regions, especially in the western hemisphere.²⁹ A new topic that had not surfaced previously was a demand, originating from the Latin Americans, that the Institute give more attention to the presence and the mission of the Brothers in higher education.³⁰ Among other advantages of the meeting, the delegates from the United States arriving in Rome found that they were not complete strangers to conferees from their own backyard.



41st General Chapter. At the opening assembly the Delegates were seated alphabetically according to their family name. Formal dress was requested for the occasion, allowing for a variety of styles. Brother Peter Clifford (LI-NE), seated in the center of the second row, can be seen adjusting his headphones. Two places to his left is Brother Norman Cook.

The Opening of the Chapter

Easter came early in 1986. April 7, the date set for the opening of the Chapter, fell on the Monday after Easter week, a decidedly better liturgical climate and also, as it turned out, a better augury for the results, than the Holy Week opening of ten years before. April 7 was also the anniversary of the *natalitia*, the birth into eternal life of John Baptist de La Salle. The opening events contrasted with the past in other ways. The chapter hall was lavishly decorated with flowers; a distinctive logo in three colors had been designed and was prominently displayed on everything from banners to stationery; television cameras were everywhere; a more creative and participatory Lasallian liturgy had been prepared.

The ceremonies opened in the chapter hall with the singing of the *Veni Creator*, duly taped for televising. The Chronicler, again Brother Benoît Marcoux from Canada, in one of his precious remarks noted that copies were provided for those who might have forgotten the words to all the verses of a once familiar hymn.³¹ After Brother José Pablo, the Superior General, spoke some words of welcome and inspiration, Brother Leonard Leduc, Secretary General, certified that 111 delegates were present with 7 yet to arrive.³² The Superior then declared the Chapter officially open and the register was passed around for the delegates to sign. As the Chronicler would remark, very florid signatures were found side by side with nearly illegible scribbles. The group then accepted Brother Gerard Rummery as the Provisional Moderator and Brother Léon Lauraire as the Provisional Secretary. The assembly also voted to accept the plan proposed by the Preparatory Commission for the first phase of the Chapter, which would carry the work forward until April 16 when the Chapter would elect its own officers. At that point, the elected Central Commission would assume direction of its progress. The whole process, which had consumed several days in earlier Chapters, was completed in one meeting lasting an hour and a half, setting a precedent for the efficient use of meeting time that would be observed, with a few exceptions, throughout the Chapter.

The opening meeting was followed by a solemn procession into the generalate chapel, with the delegates singing alternately *Sancte Joannes Baptista* and *Ubi caritas et amor*. At the end of the procession came Brother José Pablo, the Superior, surrounded by his councilors and carrying the register of capitulants to be enshrined before the relics of the Founder. The Eucharist was celebrated by aging Cardinal Gabriel-Marie Garrone, one of the important voices at Vatican II, friend of the Brothers in France and advocate of the Brothers in the

Vatican Congregation for Education. The Cardinal also gave the homily.³³ At the Offertory the oldest and youngest capitulants carried the gifts of bread and wine to the altar, followed by Brother Hervé Danielou with the Capitulants' Handbook, Brother Felix del Hoyo with the Draft Rule, and Brother Leonard Leduc with the prepared summary of notes sent by Brothers from all over the world. The liturgy set a prayerful tone that would perdure throughout the Chapter, especially at critical moments when important votes were to be cast.³⁴ After the liturgy there was set up in the basement of the CIL building what has become known euphemistically as a "fraternal gathering," followed by a celebration meal.³⁵

According to plan, the next three days were a period of "recol-lection," something between the formal retreat that had been customary through 1966 and the combination of business and liturgy that prevailed during Holy Week in 1976. Father Peter Kolvenbach, Superior General of the Jesuits, provided the input for these days. His conferences in the morning were followed by questions and then by group discussions.³⁶ He made a favorable impression by his frequent citations from the Draft Rule.³⁷ However, on the second day Father Kolvenbach's conferences turned into a long apologetic for the Vatican declaration on liberation theology, recently promulgated, especially the change from "preferential option for the poor" to "preferential love for the poor." This, and other instances of adherence to official pronouncements, provoked a number of challenges from the floor.³⁸

All day Friday, April 11, was given over to Father Gerald Arbuckle, SM, an Australian sociologist and theologian. His presentation was divided into three parts: the causes of the present chaos in religious life; the mission of religious life today; and the refounding of religious life for the future. He provided the capitulants with summaries of each section to serve as a basis for group discussion and personal reflection.³⁹ The final section on the need for "refounding persons" generated the most excitement. Some thought at first that he might be thinking of the leadership that would emerge from the upcoming elections, but he said, no, that such creative persons when once identified should be put in formation or in experimental apostolates. He gave many examples from his own experience as an Assistant to the Marist Superior General. The consensus seemed to be that his analysis of the recent past was right on target, but that the projection of possibilities for refoundation in the future was speculative at best. In any case, the day served to keep the capitulants' sights on the future rather than the past.

The half-day Saturday meeting was the Chapter's only opportunity to hear from Brother Michel Sauvage, since he was not a delegate to the Chapter.⁴⁰ Toward the end of his introductory remarks, in a paragraph worth quoting, he addressed the theme of foundation and refoundation that had been developed the day before by Father Arbuckle.

Like the Church, the Institute must be constantly reborn in the world, and even of the world. However, it is by being faithful to its own deep identity that it must be reborn. The simple idea that I would like to leave with you this morning is that the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools arose in history like a spiritual uprising which became a living body. In this sense, indeed, it is first of all to the source of spirituality that we can attribute our existence today, and it is certainly, and primarily, from spiritual dynamics that we must hope for renewal and refoundation.⁴¹

Among those spiritual dynamics, Brother Michel could isolate four: (1) De La Salle rooted his Institute in the experience of the Spirit; (2) led to depart from his familiar universe, he perceived this step as a journey of incarnation in the footsteps of Christ and in conformity to Christ's mystery as Savior; (3) associated with a group of teachers, he was led to make them his Brothers and to view the Society as a communion of persons in the image of the primitive community of Jerusalem and in reference to the unity of love in the Trinity; (4) living this foundation and aware of its frailty, and facing repeated crises which threatened to ruin everything, De La Salle became one of the most peaceful witnesses to abandonment to God and to hope. Speaking with his customary intensity in rapid-fire French, Brother Michel's profound analysis of these aspects of the spirituality of John Baptist de La Salle provided a classic text that would provide reflection for the capitulants and be a source for guidance and hope well beyond the confines of the Chapter. The text was translated for the capitulants and later published in *Lasalliana* in three languages.⁴²

The concluding work of the initial phase of the Chapter was the presentation of the reports by the officers of the central government. Monday, Tuesday, and part of Wednesday morning of the second week were given over to this. The Superior and his Council had worked together to produce a common report that had been published in advance for the capitulants. The report was organized in four sections with the second considerably subdivided, all under the heading "We see ourselves as:" (1) a community of consecrated persons (with emphasis on the contemplative dimension of our lives and the

vows as an expression of our consecration); (2) associated in a community of faith, which exercises an ecclesial ministry of evangelization, as educators, with the service of the poor as first priority, which service is extended to the missions, and is shared with others; (3) fully aware of the importance of a good formation; and (4) with structures of government that guarantee unity and fidelity (with special emphasis on the organization of regional government).⁴³ In his presentation of the report the Superior emphasized the highlights by way of commentary. The Superior and the Council wanted by this means to stress the urgency of a better understanding of the spirit of faith and the renewal of the Institute in that spirit. In this light the Chapter might focus on the problems of vocations and formation, community life and the lifestyle of the Brothers, priority commitments in the apostolate, sharing Lasallian spirituality with lay colleagues, and the demands of inculturation and ecumenism.⁴⁴ The discussion period gave an opportunity for various items in the hidden agenda to emerge under the guise of "questions of clarification," many of them beginning with the leading phrase in French, "*Pourquoi pas . . . ?*"⁴⁵

On subsequent days, the reports of the Brothers in charge of the general services were presented and discussed. Since the future status of these officers in the new Rule was moot at the time, there was more than a bit of apologia in the reports for the importance of their respective functions.⁴⁶ In a final session with the Council, a delegate asked each of the Councilors in turn to comment on the experience of the previous ten years. The replies were all positive and upbeat with stress on the good experience of community at the center.⁴⁷

Phase II: Structuring the Chapter

After the presentation of the Econome General on Wednesday morning, April 16, the Chapter was able to elect its officers and form the Central Commission to take over its affairs from the Preparatory Commission. Brother Gerard Rummery was elected General Chairman. The moderators were to be Brothers James Gaffney (Chicago), Gabriel Dubé (Trois-Rivières), and Adalberto Aranda (South Mexico), all of whom, incidentally had been present at the Miami meeting in February. Brothers Raphael Bassett (Australia), Alain Houry (Paris-Rouen), and Gregorio de Frutos (Valladolid) were elected secretaries, and Benoît Marcoux, already cited, the experienced and perceptive Chronicler. On Thursday, April 17, in a marvelous demonstration of the effective work of the Preparatory Commission, the Rules of Procedure

were adopted at one meeting with only a few amendments. The real work of the Chapter was now ready to begin, with the preliminaries out of the way in record time.

The first business to be attended to in getting the Chapter into its principal work was the presentation of the Draft Rule. During the discussion on the Rules of Procedure, some objection had been raised about the procedure for the study of the Rule. The text was evidently very displeasing to some delegates, who were reluctant to accept it even as a basis for discussion.⁴⁸ Before that could be decided, it was necessary that the Draft Rule be formally presented.

The presenter chosen for this purpose was Brother Maurice Hermans, who unfortunately was not a delegate. Brother Maurice had been a pioneer in creative approaches to the Rule ever since his landmark essay published in 1954.⁴⁹ As Procurator General with the Holy See, delegate and member of the Government Commission at the 39th and 40th General Chapters, and a member of the International Rules Commission that prepared the Draft, he was the one most qualified to make the presentation. Rather than concentrate on the text of the Draft, he outlined the history of the Institute in its dealings with church authority in relation to the Rule. He stressed that only selected articles had been submitted for approval and inclusion in the Bull of Approbation in 1725. Not until 1947, when Brother Athanase-Emile, Superior General, acting on his own authority, submitted the Rule to the Congregation of Religious for approval, was the Institute no longer able to change anything in the Rule without authorization from the Congregation. But then Vatican II directed all religious institutes to revise their rules and live with them on an experimental basis before submitting them for a new approval. The 1983 Code of Canon Law gave specific directives as to how the Constitutions, as they were now to be called, must be structured. The Draft Rule represented an attempt to meet these criteria and, at the same time, reflect the demands of the Brothers. The presentation by Brother Maurice was followed by a lengthy question period to clarify the historical and legal aspects of the Chapter's responsibility for the Rule. Once the delegates were assured that the Draft Rule could be modified and that there was no intention of reverting to the Rule of 1947, they voted to accept the Draft Rule as a basis for discussion.⁵⁰

The text of the Draft Rule was then presented, chapter by chapter, in three language groups. The presentations were made by capitulants who had been members of the International Rules Commission with the help of translators where necessary.⁵¹ This procedure seemed to help all the capitulants grasp the main lines of the text as well as

the specifics, the reasons for including or excluding certain articles, the articles that had been disputed at one level or another, and how the disputes were resolved.

According to the original plan, phase two of the Chapter was to have concluded with some days of evaluation and discernment. Because many veteran delegates thought that time had been wasted at the previous Chapter in the discernment process, the Central Commission proposed on Saturday, April 19, that the days of discernment be suppressed. This sparked a lively debate that ended in a parliamentary tangle. At issue was the desire of many capitulants to discover and address the major issues facing the Institute. They feared that these might be lost if the entire attention of the Chapter were to be focused on the Rule. After eliminating the element of evaluation, it was finally decided to devote the remaining meeting on Saturday and the first meeting on Monday to a discernment experience in language groups focused on the objectives of the Chapter and the principal issues, apart from the Rule, that the Chapter ought to address. Each group was asked to have a written report ready for a special mid-afternoon session on Monday. A judgment might then be made as to whether more time was needed to discern the central issues before forming the working commissions.

When the discernment groups reported on Monday afternoon, April 21, it was apparent that an amazing convergence in the conclusions had been reached. There was agreement on the general and specific objectives of the Chapter as outlined in the capitulants' Handbook.⁵² More surprising was the number of issues that surfaced in one way or another in all three groups: the need for evangelization in our institutions; cooperation among the Regions; a commitment to the poor and to the Young Churches in the third world; cooperation between the Brothers and the laity in Lasallian movements. After some discussion, and in view of the convergence manifest in the language groups, the late afternoon assembly on April 21 voted to terminate phase two of the Chapter at once and go directly to work in commissions.⁵³

Phase III: Work in Commissions

The capitulants' Handbook offered two options for setting up the commissions. The options were discussed during the debate on the reports from the language groups on discernment. Once it was formally voted to end phase two, a vote was taken immediately to adopt the most direct and least complex of the two plans, establishing five

commissions: Commission I, Finality and Mission; Commission II, Consecration and Community Life; Commission III, Government; Commission IV, Formation and Vitality; Commission V, The Rule. To facilitate the final redaction of the Rule, the fifth Commission would be relatively small, including the three delegates who had been members of the prechapter Rule Commission plus two others with a working knowledge of French from each language group.⁵⁴

The Commissions were encouraged to begin their work by continuing the discernment process on the critical issues, then to study the text of the Draft Rule. After a week almost totally devoted to commission work, an assembly was called for Monday, April 28, to hear the reports. Once again there was a remarkable convergence on the principal issues: the need for conversion, interdependence among the various sectors of the Institute, the service of the poor, evangelization through human and religious education, and the development of the Lasallian Family. The Formation Commission thought that these matters were sufficiently important to have the Chapter produce a Declaration on Conversion. In the reporting assembly a week later, that Commission presented a draft text of such a declaration with the proposal that all the commissions study it with a view to converting it into a capitular text. The assembly's reaction was not very favorable. To many the tone seemed negative and condemnatory, the presuppositions open to question, and the suggested remedies inadequate.⁵⁵ Furthermore, there was concern that preoccupation with such a declaration might distract the commissions from work on the Rule.⁵⁶ In the following assembly the Commission withdrew the text for further study.

Meanwhile there was widespread confusion and extended discussion on the procedures for the study and acceptance of the Rule, with particular reference to the relation of the Rule Commission to the other chapter Commissions. The original plan was to have each Commission study a section of the Draft and present its propositions to the general assembly for discussion, amendment, and vote.⁵⁷ The Rule Commission would then prepare the final text of each chapter of the Rule and present it to the assembly for a final round of discussion, amendment and vote. It soon became evident that this process would be time-consuming. After clarifying the implications and details, the Central Commission proposed and the assembly accepted to have the four Commissions present their reports to the assembly for a global orientation vote only and then submit the specific propositions to the Rule Commission for incorporation into the text to be discussed and voted in full assembly. The Government Commission took exception to this procedure and insisted on definitive votes for the specific

propositions of its report to be incorporated without change into the text of the Rule.

While the other commissions were preparing their reports on the chapters of the Draft Rule, the Rule Commission occupied its time by surveying all the notes that had been sent to the Chapter by the Brothers in response to the Draft Rule. Whenever new insights or strong tendencies were revealed through this process, they were communicated to the competent commission. During this phase of the work, members of the Rule Commission were frequently invited to address the other commissions in order to clarify the text or help to resolve disputed points.

During this period the work of the Chapter intertwined with a series of celebratory events. On Wednesday, April 23, the Eucharist was celebrated with minimal pomp and ceremony by Cardinal Etchegaray, who delivered a telling homily derived from his experience in the Vatican Secretariat for Peace and Justice. A week later, April 30, the anniversary of the Founder's birth, the celebrant was Cardinal Jerome Hamer, prefect of the Congregation for Religious.⁵⁸ On May 15, a free day this time, the Brothers' school adjoining the generalate hosted the XI pan-Italian Lasallian games, providing a chance for the capitulants to see—and hear—large numbers of real live young people in action. On May 20 a special session met with representatives from Lasallian Associations on the Lasallian Family Movement.⁵⁹ On May 22 Brother Georges Ley once again delighted the capitulants with what had become his traditional recital on the chapel organ.

Election of the Superior General and his Council

With the Commissions moving forward with their work and the approach of mid-May, it was time to prepare for the election of the major officers to guide the Institute until the next Chapter. A preliminary survey of the capitulants revealed only two major candidates for the office of Superior: Brother John Johnston, the incumbent Vicar General, and Brother Genaro Saenz de Ugarte, who had been Visitor of Argentina and Director of CIL.⁶⁰ The election was scheduled for the 11:00 a.m. assembly on Wednesday, May 14, with delegates alternating in an all-night prayer vigil the night before. The customary formalities already described were observed in their simplified form. To no one's surprise, Brother John was elected on the first ballot. He accepted graciously; his first words to the delegates were self-effacing ("I hope the Lord knows what he is doing!"), closing with a plea for support and for prayers.⁶¹ Later that day, in the evening assembly, he

commented at some length on the progress that the Institute had made during the previous ten years, concluding with a glowing tribute to his predecessor, Brother Pablo, for "the quality of his presence and the vigor of his leadership."⁶²



41st General Chapter. Brother José Pablo presents the seals of the Institute to his successor, Brother John Johnston.

The day after the election, the feast of the Founder was celebrated with a solemn Mass in French in the evening. The following day, Friday, was the day set for the papal audience. Due to the press of business, general assemblies were held both in the morning before departure for the Vatican and afterwards in the late afternoon. Arriving at the Vatican, the capitulants were ushered up the six long flights of stairs to the Consistory Hall. The private audience began with an address to the Most Holy Father by the newly elected Superior. Describing the work of the Chapter, Brother John concluded with these words:

In short, Holy Father, we are asking ourselves who it is the Lord wants us to be and what it is he wants us to do with our lives. And we are challenging ourselves and our Brothers to strive with renewed commitment to become the Brothers that Saint De La Salle wants us to be.

It is in these dispositions, therefore, most Holy Father, that we await with anticipation your words of direction, guidance, and encouragement, knowing that your message will be a blessing for us, for our Chapter, for our Institute and for the mission God has confided to us.⁶³



41st General Chapter. Brother José Pablo (right) presents Brother John Johnston (left), the newly elected Superior General, to Pope John Paul II.

The Pope's reply, which reflected the concerns expressed in the report of the General Council, stressed the themes of the Chapter: renew the contemplative dimension of your consecrated lives; express the particular character of the Catholic school; encourage cooperation between Brothers and lay people sharing Lasallian ideals, including lay teachers, parents of the students, and alumni. Just before extending his blessing, he concluded by saying, "Yours is one of the most beautiful vocations, consisting, as it does, in fostering, in close union with God, the emergence and growth of the personalities of young people entrusted to you, for the service of society and for the glory of Our Lord."⁶⁴ After the Pope greeted each delegate in turn,⁶⁵ a group picture with the Pope was taken in the adjoining Clementine Hall. That evening, the choir of the Pius IX school in Rome gave a concert in the generalate chapel.

The morning of Saturday, May 17, was devoted to electing the six members of the General Council. The results of a preliminary survey,

published the day before, were a guide to the way the elections would go.⁶⁶ Although it was stated the Councilors should in principle be chosen for their areas of expertise and their ability to relate well to one another, it was inevitable that the choice would in fact, be made on the basis of regional representation. On the first ballot, Brother Genaro Saenz was elected, and was later elected from among the Councilors to be Vicar General. The Councilors elected in succeeding ballots followed the results of the survey: Brothers Vincent Rabemahafaly (Africa), Eugene Bodel (France), Martín Corral (Spain), and Gerard Rummery (Australia and CIL Director). The election of the sixth Councilor was less predictable; it took three more ballots to arrive at the majority by which Brother Joseph Hendron from England was elected.⁶⁷

Phase IV: Decision, Formulation, and the Rule

By Monday, May 19, the commission reports on the articles of the Rule had been presented to the assembly, reviewed and edited by the Rule Commission, and were ready for presentation and a final vote.⁶⁸ The order of presentation in the assembly by members of the Rule Commission did not follow the sequence of the chapters of the Rule, but rather the order in which the Commissions completed their work.⁶⁹ Over a two-week period, from May 19 until May 30, each chapter of the Rule was presented, first in its entirety and then article by article. In the course of the discussion the articles could be amended from the floor. More often they were accepted by *juxta modum* votes whereby the delegates were able to submit recommendations (*modi*) to the Commission for possible inclusion in the text. In this way the authorship of the final text could be ascribed to the body of the Chapter representing the entire Institute.

The results of the process are now enshrined in the text of the Rule that was ultimately accepted by the Chapter and approved by the Congregation for Religious. The text is readily available and speaks for itself. It might be useful in this context, however, to highlight some features of the Rule in the light of the decisions and debates that were significant in developing the final text.⁷⁰

The Organizational Structure of the Rule

The Rule constitutes a single entity. Some articles are constitutions that enunciate principles and, once approved, can be changed only by church authority; others are statutes that specify the way the principles are to be applied in the Institute. Changes in the statutes can be made

by successive General Chapters. To provide inspiration and continuity, the published version of the Rule is preceded by the integral text of Chapter Two of the Founder's Rule of 1718 on the Spirit of the Institute.

The Rule is divided into two parts: Part One treats of the elements that are integral to the Vocation of the Brother; Part Two deals with the Government of the Institute.⁷¹ The introduction, or Epigraph (in French, *Exergue*), to Part One is the article from Chapter XVI of the Rule of 1718 on the twofold commandment of love as the foundation for all observance of the Rule. The text of Luke 22: 24–27 on authority as service is used as an introduction to Part Two on Government. The principal ideas culled from the introduction to the 1967 Book of Government and the 1985 Draft Rule are incorporated into the first article dealing with government. Chapter Ten on the Vitality of the Institute is presented as a conclusion to the entire text. There is an explicit reference to the Founder at the beginning of the first six chapters and the last. The lead articles in Chapters I, II, IV, VI and X refer to the Founder's experience in his personal history; the lead articles in Chapter III on consecration and Chapter V on prayer reflect the Founder's spirituality. As first proposed in the Chapter of 1976, the three chapters of the Rule on government emphasize the theme of community as the principle of organization within the Institute.

Chapter I: The Purpose and Spirit of the Institute

Chapter I of the Rule might be said to constitute a Rule in itself. It contains all the essential elements preserved in a continuing tradition going back to the Founder. If all the rest of the text of the Rule were lost, the essence would be found in this chapter: the history of the foundation, the ecclesial dimension, the apostolic purpose, the spirit of faith and zeal, formation and brotherhood. The last article of this chapter defines the vocation of the Brother as the integration of the three elements of consecration as a lay religious, the apostolic ministry of education, especially of the poor, and community life.⁷²

Chapter II: The Mission of the Institute

Chapter II is the most complicated and heterogeneous. In its earliest form, the major emphasis was on catechetics. That had to be expanded to develop the relationship between education and evangelization; to provide a balance between the schools and other apostolates, to deal adequately with the problems of inculturation and the missionary character of the Institute, to specify the distinctive role of the Brothers'

community, and at the same time recognize the important part played in a shared mission by lay Lasallian associates.

Chapter III: The Consecrated Life

The problem in constructing Chapter III was to compress the material from five distinct chapters in the 1967 Rule and four chapters in the 1976 Book of Government.⁷³ The original chapter on religious consecration, and the Founder's stress on consecration as more fundamental than its expression by vow, is preserved in the first two articles of the present text. As in the Draft, there is no use of the term "evangelical counsels," but reference rather to chastity, poverty, and obedience "lived according to the Gospel."⁷⁴ Association is now incorporated into the vow of educational service to the poor, a contemporary way to express the original vow of association to keep gratuitous schools. After 20 years of experimenting with a vow of fidelity, it was decided to restore the traditional vow of stability, interpreting it in the text of the Rule as an expression of personal fidelity. Whereas the vow of fidelity was taken only at perpetual profession, the restored vow of stability is again taken at every profession of vows, whether temporary or perpetual.⁷⁵

For the first time, the formula of vows is incorporated into the text of the Rule. There was extended discussion and debate at the Chapter on the text. The principal difficulty concerned the reference in the Draft Rule to the Brothers as "associated to work together and by association in the educational ministry for the service of the poor." The traditional formula read, "to keep together and by association gratuitous schools," modified in 1967 to read "to conduct together and by association schools for the service of the poor." The new text in the Draft was designed to take into account the many Brothers who no longer exercise their ministry in the schools. Many in the Chapter, however, argued that "educational ministry" was too broad and that the formula ought not to be tampered with, some even wanting to restore the outdated reference to gratuity. Finally, an amendment was moved to restore the formula of 1967, which passed by a narrow margin. Once the amendment was accepted, the entire formula as amended was approved by a solid majority.⁷⁶

The chapter on consecration ends, paradoxically, with four articles dealing with separation from the Institute. Earlier, a proposal had been made to place these articles at the conclusion of the chapter on formation. That placement would have been even more inappropriate. Canon law requires that the subject be treated somewhere. Since separation concerns vows, it was decided to situate these articles at the end of this chapter.

Chapter IV: Community Life

Chapter IV of the Rule provoked very little by way of controversy or debate. It reflects very well the conclusions reached at the Chapter in 1976 that the vitality of the Institute depends on the vitality of the communities that constitute it. The chapter describes the community of the Brothers as a community of faith where the experience of God is shared, an apostolic community that plays a visible role in the educational community, and a fraternal community where brotherhood is shared within the community and in openness to others, especially to the members of the Lasallian Family. The Community Annual Program is mandated, and the concept extended by a recommendation that the Brothers also undertake a Personal Annual Program to promote and measure their progress in the never-ending process of continuing formation. The Brother Director has an important role in serving the Brothers and supporting the life of the community.

Chapter V: The Life of Prayer

Chapter V attempts to provide some solid doctrine on the nature and importance of prayer in the Brother's life. There are extensive references in the margins to the writings of the Founder, from which the doctrine is derived. The tradition is maintained that regards meditation as the principal daily exercise and the Eucharist as the energizing force in the life of the community.⁷⁷ The individual Brother is responsible for his personal prayer, the community together is responsible for the community prayer. Rather than legislate specific ascetical practices, the Rule emphasizes the ascetical dimension of community life itself, as well as the demand of work, the daily routine, and the infirmities that are part of human and religious life. Recourse to a spiritual director is recommended but not mandated. Traditional institute devotions are to be continued in an appropriate and contemporary form.

Extensive discussion before, during, and after the Chapter centered on what is now article 73, article 59a in the Draft. It is the one place where a specific norm is established for the amount of time, two hours, to be given every day to the Lord in personal and community spiritual exercises. In preparing the Draft, the Rule Commission felt that it was not enough to provide generalized exhortations to prayer, that some norm should be provided for Brothers and communities to measure themselves against. It was not intended to legislate the matter. In view of the amount of time Brothers spend in various forms of relaxation, light reading, and television, for example, two hours for prayer and spiritual reading did not seem to be an unrea-

sonable goal to aim at. In the often intense discussion, different points of view came to the surface. Some were fearful of a return to the old legalism and so wanted to omit any reference to time whatsoever. Others wanted minimum times specified for each of the exercises. Commission Two of the Chapter had reworked the article to distinguish between what was required of the Brother and what was required of the community, including meditation as a community exercise.⁷⁸ The debate continued over several meetings, including some strong warnings about the danger of trying to legislate matters of prayer and the advantages of leaving such matters to the good will of the Brothers. In many places, it was said, the Brothers are recovering the practice of prayer based on personal conviction rather than on legislation.⁷⁹ Eventually, it was voted to restore the text as it was in the Draft Rule without trying to legislate precisely the responsibility of the community as distinct from the individual Brother in the normative two hours for spiritual exercises.

Chapter VI: Formation

Chapter VI opens with a reflection on the response of Saint John Baptist de La Salle to the design of God in his regard and the way he transformed his life into a spiritual journey. Each vocation, similarly, arises from the mystery of the unique encounter between God and the person who is called. This is the framework in which the Rule treats of the principles and procedures to be followed in the pastoral ministry of vocations. It also provides an inspirational context for the legislation needed for the successive stages of formation and a motivation for recognizing that religious formation is the work of a lifetime.

Chapters VII, VIII, IX: Government

The section on Government opens with a textual citation of the Lucan account of the discourse of Jesus on authority as service.⁸⁰ It is followed by a short article that reflects the evolution of the recent Chapters in dealing with government: subsidiarity in 1967, coresponsibility from 1976, and interdependence in 1986. The three chapters on government are so structured as to emphasize the Central Government, the District, and the Region as centers of the communion that exists among the Brothers. This follows the organizational principle developed at the Chapter in 1976. Concerning the General Chapter, the Rule now reduces the interval between chapters from ten years to seven. The principle is established that every District, Delegation, and sub-District with 20 or more members is entitled to a representative at

the Chapter.⁸¹ Every District must belong to a particular Region, but it is left to each Region to determine whether to have a canonical superior or some other kind of executive at its head.⁸² Otherwise, most of the essential articles from the 1976 Book of Government form the basis of the new text.

Not all of the material in the earlier Book of Government, however, could be incorporated into the new Rule. To provide for these items of detail, each of the Commissions was asked to submit to the General Council items for inclusion in a directory, or a series of directories, to be prepared after the Chapter. Suggestions were forthcoming on guidelines for the Young Churches, job descriptions for the general services, specific formation programs, a handbook for Visitors, and the like.⁸³

Chapter X: The Vitality of the Institute

Chapter X forms a fitting and inspirational conclusion to the Rule. The chapter begins and ends with reference to Saint John Baptist de La Salle. In between are exhortations to fidelity and conversion, and motivations to study, understand, and observe the Rule. The Lasallian tradition is to be shared with Lasallian associations by assisting them in developing their own modes of organization. The vitality of the Institute is seen to be the responsibility of each Brother, especially in the pastoral ministry of vocations. The last word in the Rule, as the first word of the introduction, invokes the spirit of faith and zeal that the Founder left as a legacy to the Institute.

Phase V: Implementation

From the beginning of the 1986 Chapter, some delegates expressed the fear that the revision and approval of the Rule might so dominate the agenda that the larger issues facing the Institute would be neglected. As already been noted, some days were provided for a discernment process, at first in language groups and then in the chapter commissions. This process resulted in a remarkable consensus on the major areas of concern, in particular on the need for both personal and institutional conversion expressed in a willingness to change. Once they had handed over to the Rule Commission the results of their deliberation on the Rule, the Commissions were free to begin to draft a message to the Brothers of the Institute in an attempt to convey the sense of urgency that had developed at the Chapter.



41st General Chapter. Delegates from the United States and Toronto Region with Brother John Johnston, the newly elected Superior. *First row:* Brothers Mark Murphy, Paul Mc Donough, Jerome Sullivan, John Johnston, Dominic Ehrmantraut, Benedict Oliver. *Second row:* Francis Vesel, Timothy Balfe, Thomas Caldwell, Francis Mc Crea, Norman Cook, James Gaffney. *Third row:* Peter Clifford, Luke Salm, Timothy Wentworth, Raphael Bodin, Wayne Viguerie.

A draft text of the message was brought to the assembly floor on the day before the Chapter was to conclude. After discussion, it was sent back for some revisions and then approved the following day. Addressed to all the Brothers of the Institute, the purpose of the message is stated in these words: "As the Body of the Institute, *we, your Brothers Capitulants, send out an urgent call to conversion*—a conversion which will come about through personal spiritual renewal and a refounding of our mission."⁸⁴ The first section deals with personal renewal and conversion by becoming spiritually alive through the spirit of faith, living the Rule, and the practice of meditative prayer. This is followed by a section calling for a recommitment to the mission of evangelization through education. Finally, the Chapter asks the Brothers to express their commitment to conversion by a further commitment to the poor, by sharing their resources and skills in a spirit of interdependence, and by contributing to the development of the Lasallian Family. In order to foster the last recommendation, a parallel

message addressed to the members of the Lasallian Family was prepared, discussed, and voted during the closing days of the Chapter.⁸⁵

Meanwhile, to aid the capitulants in bringing the highlights of the Chapter back to the Districts, a video cassette had been produced by a professional team based in Rome.⁸⁶ The tape introduces the viewer to the Founder and the first assembly of the Brothers 300 years earlier in 1686, and contains scenes from the opening of the Chapter, the Commissions at work, the election of the Superior, and the papal audience. The themes of the Chapter are illustrated by photos of the Brothers at work in various parts of the world, especially in the poorer areas.

Formal Ceremonies Closing the Chapter

Beginning with the evening assembly on Monday, June 2, the text of the Rule and the two prepared messages were presented for a final vote, a process that lasted through part of the morning assembly the following day. Although not strictly part of the formal closing, the process was surrounded with such solemnity that it hardly could be treated as a routine business meeting. As each chapter of the Rule was presented in turn, there was a moment to recall the divine presence, after which an appropriate passage was read from the Founder's writings. After the final vote was taken on a chapter, a verse of a hymn of praise was sung,⁸⁷ alternating among the three languages. This procedure was followed ten times. It helped confirm and perpetuate the prayerful atmosphere that had pervaded the entire Chapter, especially in its more solemn deliberations. No chapter of the Rule received fewer than 93 votes out of a possible 107; most of the chapters received more than 100 affirmative votes. All that remained was for the Superior and the Council to submit the text for approval.⁸⁸

The second assembly on Tuesday, June 3, was given over to the formal closing itself with each capitulant placing his signature to the book of the Acts of the Chapter. The Superior addressed some concluding remarks to the Chapter. After citing the familial nature of the Chapter and paying tribute to Brother José Pablo and colleagues on the previous Council, Brother John cited the approval of the Rule as a major achievement and then summarized the principal themes: association and interdependence, our role as evangelizers, catechists and youth ministers, solidarity with the poor, and the Lasallian Family movement. He concluded with an extended reflection on the spirit of faith and zeal. One remark in his talk might be used to summarize the achievement and the mood of the Chapter. He said: "We have brought

to a successful conclusion a long process of who it is God wants us to be, what it is he wants us to do, and how he wants us to do it. We have arrived at a marvelous consensus on all the vital issues and have accepted overwhelmingly a new expression of the fruit of our discernment."⁸⁹

At the closing liturgy on the evening of June 3 the text of the Rule as approved by the Chapter was carried in procession and placed by the Superior at the relics of the Founder. Addressing the Founder in prayer, the Superior expressed himself in these terms: "Today we feel ourselves called to a deep conversion, to serious personal renewal, to a determined refoundation of our mission. We wish to commit ourselves yet further to this process of continual conversion." The capitulants replied in kind, and with a rousing AMEN! the 41st General Chapter of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools came to an inspired end.

Notes

1. Already cited in Chapter 7, above.
2. Among the changes was a revised terminology. The traditional distinction between orders and congregations, solemn and simple vows, was suppressed; the generic title "institutes of consecrated life" was introduced. Under this umbrella would come both religious institutes and secular institutes. A religious institute is defined as one where the members are bound by vows (or similar "sacred bonds") and live in community; in a secular institute the members are also bound by vows or the equivalent, but do not live in community. The title "societies of apostolic life" was adopted to describe groups that would require neither sacred bonds nor community life. See the Code of Canon Law, canons 573 to 746.
3. It can be disputed whether 1680 is the best date. The Founder assisted Adrien Nyel in opening the first schools in 1679. The only development in 1680 was De La Salle's decision to invite the schoolteachers into his home for meals. In the minds of many Lasallian scholars, 1682 would be a better date. In that year, De La Salle assumed charge of the teachers and moved with them into a separate residence to form the first community. It might even be argued that the Institute did not take definitive shape until 1694 when the Rule was approved, the exclusively lay character of the Institute was determined, and De La Salle with 12 of the Brothers took perpetual vows for the first time. The choice of 1980 to celebrate the tercentenary was dictated by the fact that the date 1680 was submitted in the application for the Bull of Approval, the bicentennial was celebrated in 1880, and Mr. Armand Machat, President of the World Confederation of Lasallian Associations, hoped to have the celebration during his tenure in that office.
4. Parménie is the name of a hilltop property near Grenoble in France where De La Salle spent some weeks toward the end of his life trying to discern God's will at a time when the Institute was in crisis. See L. Burkhard and L. Salm, *Encounters: De La Salle at Parménie*, published at Romeoville in

1983. Brother Leo Burkhard was responsible for restoring the property, which the Institute had acquired in 1964, and turning it into an attractive retreat and conference center.

5. These events are described in detail in Institute Bulletin #224, December 1980.

6. The visit is described at great length and with some striking photographs in Institute Bulletin #225. The Pope's visit had originally been scheduled earlier but had to be postponed as a result of the assassination attempt in May 1980.

7. Circular 415, *Perspectives for 1986*, October 1, 1981. See the summary column "After the Chapter" in *Handbook for Captitulants 1986*, p. 10.

8. Circular 418, *Orientalions for the Pastoral Ministry of Vocations and for Initial Formation*, March 19, 1983.

9. Circular 417, December 23, 1982.

10. The text is included as the final chapter in the biography by Brother Leo Kirby entitled simply *Brother Charles Henry Buttmer, FSC*, published at Romeville in 1985. A more complete and critical biography of Brother Charles has been prepared by Brother Ronald Isetti; there is some hope it will be published in time to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the death of Brother Charles.

11. Bulletin #227, December 1984, describes the occasion and its significance.

12. See Bulletin #228, May 1985.

13. This could be considered a rather disappointing response in view of the number of Brothers (about 10,000 at the time), the number of articles in the Rule, and the fact that most of the replies came from relatively few sectors of the Institute with nothing at all from some sectors. The largest number came from the United States and from Spain. A substantial number of the Spanish observations had to do with the poor quality of the translation into Spanish. There were rather few responses from France. It was not until after the Commission had completed the draft text that substantive analysis of the Draft Rule with positive suggestions for its improvement was submitted by the District of Lille.

14. See Circular 419, April 30, 1984. The official title of the Commission gives a more accurate idea of its mandate: *Commsion Internationale pour la Redaction des Règles*. It came to be known as the "Rules Commission" or "Rule Commission," sometimes abbreviated as IRC or the French equivalent CIR. The members of the International Rules Commission were Brothers Felix del Hoyo, Procurator General with the Holy See, who was elected Chairman; Maurice Hermans, his predecessor as Procurator and a dominant force in the revision of the Rule since his landmark articles in 1954; Jean Pungier, a member for many years of the CIL staff in Rome and author of several works on the Founder's educational and catechetical writings; Luke Salm from New York and Martín Lasa from Bilbao, who had been delegates at the previous Chapter; Bruno Alpago, Auxiliary Visitor of Argentina and a graduate of the Jesus Magister Institute in Rome; Jean-Pierre Lauby, a young French missionary Brother who had made a significant contribution to the international symposium on prayer sponsored by the General Council in 1980; and Damian Lundy from England, author of several collections of hymns and a member of the International Catechetical Commission. Brother Maurice was the oldest at 73, Brother Damian the youngest at 40.

15. The author cannot refrain from commenting that the experience of working on the Rule Commission and of building and sharing community with its distinguished and affable members was the privilege of a lifetime. There were profound experiences of shared prayer to guarantee that the text of the Rule would emerge from the Spirit present with and within the Commission. There were, besides, excursions to explore the beautiful Italian countryside, fraternal celebration of birthdays marked with spirit(s), song and story, together with a prevalent good humor in the face of language and cultural differences or other manifestations of human folly and foibles.

16. Contained in the report of a meeting held at Dinard on May 21, 1984 entitled *Etude comparée des Règles ou Constitutions des dix Institutes*. Copy in ANYD.

17. These four principles were often reiterated during the course of the year in formal and informal, written and oral communications from the Commission and its members to interested persons and groups within the Institute.

18. A progress report on the work of the Commission was sent by the author to the Visitors of the United States and Toronto Region for their January 1985 meeting. Brother Damian Lundy sent a similar report to the Brothers in England. Copies in ANYD.

19. The General Council had sent to the Commission written communications in September 1984 and January 1985 outlining specific points that the Council thought ought to be featured in the revised text of the Rule. The Commission worked on the presumption that it was not bound by these suggestions. Apart from an introductory meeting in September, it was not until late April that the first formal dialogue between the two groups took place. Among the criticisms made by the Council were the lack of uniform style (evidence of composite authorship and reminiscent of the definition of a camel as "a horse designed by a commission"), lack of attention to the Young Churches, not enough reference to the Lasallian family, and failure to take seriously the written communications from the General Council based on their experience of the Institute around the world.

20. The Commission had wanted the office of regional superior to be optional whereas the Council wanted it obligatory. Some members of the Commission wanted the interval between General Chapters to be kept at ten years whereas the Council preferred six. The Council also was opposed to making provision in the Rule for the offices of general services. A summary of the pros and cons of these disputed points was prepared by the Rule Commission to help the dialogue. Copy in ANYD. In most cases, the position of the Council was incorporated into the draft Rule, although some were later modified by the Chapter.

21. Circular 420.

22. The official statistics show a decline in the number of Brothers from 14,233 in 1970 to 9,190 in 1984; from 264 novices in 1970 to 150 in 1984. On December 31, 1984, 29 districts had no postulants or aspirants. France had only 10 Brothers in temporary vows, Central Europe only 3 (except Poland where there were 44), and Canada had none. The largest numbers of Brothers in temporary vows were in Spain and Latin America.

23. Circular 419, April 30, 1984. The circular also gives official notice of the imminent canonization of Brother Miguel.

24. The appointments had been announced in Circular 419.

25. In a memorandum dated September 10, 1984, the Preparatory Commission sent to the Rule Commission a proposal on how the revised text of

the Rule would be treated at the Chapter, involving among other things a series of questionnaires to be answered by the elected capitulants before the Chapter. In a joint meeting on October 12, 1984, the Rule Commission responded with a proposal of its own that would have the Chapter deal with the Rule in much the same way that the Chapter of 1967 dealt with the Declaration. After the Rule Commission explained the complexity of its work and the principles that would guide it, the Preparatory Commission agreed to wait until the draft text was complete before making any further proposals as to how the Chapter should deal with it. A few days later the Preparatory Commission sent another communication expressing concern 1, that the Brothers generally, presuming that the 1967 Rule would remain unchanged, were not motivated to make suggestions for change and were not prepared for such a radical revision of the Rule as was now envisioned; and 2, that the Brothers of the Institute should be alerted as soon as possible that a very different style of Rule was in the offing. The two Commissions agreed that this would be the responsibility of the Superior and his Council. Copies of the relevant documents in ANYD.

26. Copies of the Draft and the definitive *Handbook for Capitulants* in ANYD.

27. It was said that North Americans tend to think of global problems on an east-west axis, identifying with the European mind-set and ignoring the north-south axis that would make for better understanding in the western hemisphere.

28. The discussions are reported at some length in the minutes of these meetings. They were prepared and distributed by Brother Brendan Hayden, Regional Administrative Secretary, who had been present at the Miami meeting.

29. Copies of the correspondence and papers relating to the meeting, as well as the minutes prepared by Brother Brendan Hayden, are in ANYD.

30. The topic had been raised in Bogota at a meeting of Latin American Brothers involved in higher education. The following conclusions were drawn at the Miami meeting: 1, despite the number of institutions of higher learning in the Institute, very little is said in institute documents about the role of Brothers in higher education; 2, the General Chapter needs to give direction to this ministry; 3, a study of the charism of the Founder should be made to apply it to higher education, campus ministry, etc.; 4, the General Chapter should speak to the ministry of the Brothers in higher education as a valid expression of the Lasallian charism but give definite guidelines for Lasallian universities. See the minutes of the Miami meeting, p. 18. Somehow this resolution seems not to have engaged the attention of the Chapter. It is noted here as a possible item for a future agenda.

31. See the *Chronique du 41e Chapitre Général* in AMG.

32. In addition to the 116 originally announced, the Superior exercised his option of appointing 2 additional delegates, Brother Felix del Hoyo, Procurator General with the Holy See and Chairman of the Rules Commission, and Brother Gerard Rummery, Director of the CIL.

33. The microphone was not working well and it was difficult to hear. No matter, the French text had been distributed in advance. The author was asked to provide an English translation. Copies in ANYD.

34. An attractive printed booklet was provided containing the hymns and directives for the liturgy. Copy in ANYD.

35. The bar in the basement proved to be a permanent fixture and a convenient resource for the English-speaking and Spanish-speaking delegates who were housed in the CIL building. The bar was continually stocked with soft drinks and beer supplied by the kitchen. When the occasion seemed to warrant, which was often enough, something stronger could be obtained easily from the nearby supermarket at very low cost. The Spanish-speaking Brothers were a bit shy about joining in the nightly gatherings, preferring instead the television available in the adjacent rooms. Since there was no television in English, the preference for those speaking that language was to sit around and talk over the day's events. In reply to occasional remarks in Spanish about American customs, it was pointed out that at least the Anglophones, as they were called, were closer in their evening gatherings to the tradition of recreation of Rule. It became customary on Fridays for delegates of every linguistic persuasion to gather at the bar for an evening of spirited song and story.

36. Rather complete summaries of each of the six conferences were translated and distributed to the capitulants. Copies in ANYD. Shorter summaries can be found in the minutes labeled C.G. 1986: 2 and also in the Institute Bulletin #229, March 1987. Copies in ANYD.

37. The author notes in his diary for April 10, "I thank him [Fr. Kolvenbach] for citations from the Draft Rule. He says he didn't realize at first that it was a draft. Kidding from the French who say they want to use it as a 'target' to shoot down." Text in ANYD. The remark of the French proved to be more than just kidding.

38. Noted for April 8 and 9 in the author's diary in ANYD.

39. Copies of text and outlines in ANYD.

40. This came about because of a strange set of circumstances. Originally, the District of Lille to which Brother Michel belonged had been allotted two delegates. Presuming that the Visitor would be the first elected, as he was, the second spot would most certainly have gone to Brother Michel. However, the French region had recently undergone a restructuring with the leadership entrusted to a regional superior. In order to assure a place at the Chapter for the regional superior, the District of Lille agreed, with the consent of the General Council, to cede its second delegate to the regional superior.

41. See the citation below.

42. *Lasalliana*, 11 (1987) O-12 to O-16.

43. Entitled *From the General Council to the Forty-First General Chapter*, the English language version covers 85 pages of double-spaced type. Copy in ANYD.

44. See the minutes, C.G. 1986: 3.

45. So noted for Monday, April 14, in the author's diary in ANYD.

46. Typical of some of the problems between the Council and the general services can be seen in the remark one of the councilors made to the author, "I can see why we need an econome, but not an econome *general!*"

47. These are the comments of the author for April 15 in his diary in ANYD.

48. The opposition came mostly from a group of French delegates who made it clear from their arrival in Rome that they were opposed to the Draft. They found it lacking in inspiration and regretted the loss of many articles from the 1966 Rule. Their expressed preference was that the Rule of 1966 be used as the basis for discussion, an evident impossibility in the light of the canonical requirements. As the Chapter progressed, these concerns were

brought to the fore and resulted in a final text that was a decided improvement over the Draft.

49. See the development in Chapter 1, above.

50. A rather detailed account of Brother Maurice's presentation and the points raised in the question period can be found in the three pages of minutes C.G. 1986: 5. Copy in ANYD.

51. Chapters 1 to 5 were presented by Brother Luke Salm, 6 to 8 by Brother Felix del Hoyo, and 9 and 10 by Brother Martín Lasa. Concerning the author's presentation, the Chronicler notes under date of April 17, "*Nous apprenons au passage que le Frère Luke est très favorable à la conservation du voeu de stabilité et qu'une partie de son coeur est anticlericale . . . son entretien à bâtons rompus et marque au coin de l'humor nous donne un aperçu des points qui susciteront des débats un peu plus véhéments.*" *Chronique* in AMG.

52. According to the Handbook, the general objectives were to be realized through discernment, legislation, and an administrative structure; specific objectives in resolutions to give the Institute clear directions for the future, approve the Rule, review the government, elect the Superior and his Council, and involve all the Brothers in a pastoral effort to implement the results of the Chapter.

53. The vote was 100 in favor and 8 against. C.G. 1986: 9.

54. To the three members of the prechapter Commission (Del Hoyo, Lasa, and Salm) were added Brother Patrice Marey, who was elected Chairman, and Brothers Xavier Mulmann, Raphael Bodin, Baptist Croos, Gabriel Dubé, Saturnino Gallego, and Noé Zevallos.

55. The Chronicler notes under date of May 3: "Reaction to the document depends on whether you prefer a fulminating Moses or a Good Shepherd. One capitulant remarks that the Gospel presents the Kingdom as a seed that had to grow, not an atom bomb." French text in AMG.

56. Details of the debate are given in the minutes, C.G. 1986: 15.

57. Some seemed to regard the function of the Rule Commission as nothing more than editorial and cosmetic. The Rule Commission understood its mandate to involve interpretation and redaction in order to produce a coherent text. In any case, it was always understood that the assembly would have the final say on the text as a whole and each of the articles.

58. To signify the importance of his office and the occasion, the Cardinal appeared in full pontificals, gave an extended homily on the nature of religious life, and distributed Communion by intinction. Noted under date of April 30 in the author's diary in ANYD and also in the official *Chronique* in AMG.

59. This session is reported at length in Bulletin #229.

60. It had been the intent of the Central Commission to publish the complete results of the survey, but no other candidate received more than a very few nominating votes.

61. His remarks are quoted at some length in Institute Bulletin #229, pp. 14-15.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid., p.17.

64. The complete text, with a reproduction of the group photo taken afterwards, is in Bulletin #229, pp. 18-19.

65. A few days before, the author had been the object of a vicious attack in the ultraconservative *Wanderer* for a variety of heresies and for hav-

ing been an evil influence on the previous General Chapters. En route to the audience, the Superior threatened (in jest, of course) to identify the author to the Pope as the culprit. Instead, he said simply, "Here is a Brother from the United States."

66. On the second survey published on May 16, Brother Genaro, Latin American and runner-up for the office of Superior, had a clear majority. Four Brothers had more than 70 nominating votes: Vincent Rabemahafaly, Eugene Bodel, Martin Corral, and Gerard Rummery. There was a gap between them and the next group with from 39 to 23 votes: Brothers Saturnino Gallego (Spain), August Vanwetswinkel (Belgium), Victor Franco (Philippines, not a delegate), and Jean-Marie Thouard (France). The Anglophones on the list (Gaffney, Croos, Conroy, Salm, and Hendron) had between 17 and 4 votes in that order.

67. On the sixth ballot there was a tie vote between Saturnino and August; on the seventh ballot August was ahead by 11 votes, but without a majority. It was becoming clear that the delegates did not want another Spaniard (or another Frenchman or American) on the Council, but preferred a Central European. There was a coffee break during which the Belgian Brother earnestly asked that his name be withdrawn from consideration. After the break, on the eighth ballot Brother Joseph Hendron was elected with the capitulants echoing the sentiments expressed the day before by the new Superior, "The Lord knows what he is doing." The tallies are in the minutes C.G. 1986: 25.

68. During the previous week, in order to prepare the definitive text, the members of the Rule Commission had to absent themselves from the general assemblies dealing with matters unrelated to the Rule.

69. The process of presentation by members of the Rule Commission and voting in general assembly occupied two working weeks. On Monday, May 19, Brother Patrice Marey presented Chapters 6 and 7 on the General Chapter and the Central Government; on May 20 Brother Xavier Mulmann presented Chapter 1 on the Nature and Finality of the Institute; on May 21 Brother Luke Salm presented Chapter 3 on the Consecrated Life; on May 23 Brother Patrice presented Chapter 8 on the District and the Region; on May 24 Brother Noé Zevallos presented Chapter 4 on Community Life; on Monday, May 26, Brother Raphael Bodin presented Chapter 5 on Prayer Life; on May 28 Brother Xavier presented Chapter 2 on Mission; on May 29 Brother Martin Lasa presented Chapter 9 on Formation; on May 30 Brother Xavier presented Chapter 10 on the Vitality of the Institute.

70. A more general history of the development of the Rule and its significant features can be found in an essay by Brother Patrice Marey, who was President of the Rule Commission of the Chapter, published in *Lasalliana* 11 (1987), O-17 and O-18.

71. The Draft Rule had three parts. During the Chapter the Commission thought it would be better to group the chapter on Formation under Part One and to consider the final chapter on Vitality as a kind of conclusion to the entire text. The main ideas in the introductions to the three parts of the Draft were incorporated into the text of the articles.

72. This article provoked some discussion at the Chapter. In its original form it referred to the integration of apostolic ministry, religious consecration, and community life. It was objected that this might be said of any religious vocation. The present expanded text meets that objection. When it was pointed out that the integration of the three elements is a major theme in the 1967

Declaration, some wanted to reject that document as outdated. (Others, including the author, were of the opinion that it has yet to be discovered and implemented.)

73. In the 1967 Rule there was a separate chapter on religious consecration, followed by a chapter each on chastity, poverty, obedience, and the special vows of the Institute. The Book of Government had distinct chapters on the juridical obligations of chastity, poverty, and obedience, as well as the legislation relative to separation from the Institute.

74. The intention here is to respect the biblical scholarship that finds no basis in the New Testament for two types of Christians, those who follow the commandments and those who follow the counsels. It also echoes the Founder's teaching and the principle stressed in Vatican II that the Gospel, that is, the Gospel in its entirety, is the basis of the Christian and religious life.

75. Some problems had arisen with the requirement that the vow of fidelity be taken only at perpetual profession. This led some young Brothers to be considered or consider themselves as second class members of the Institute. It was argued that if one can be chaste or obedient for a limited period, one can also be faithful or stable for the same amount of time. Although neither fidelity nor stability as the matter of a vow adds anything to the obligations already incurred, it was thought that, in a very unstable world, there might be some value in highlighting the values represented by the traditional vow.

76. See the minutes of May 21 for a summary of the discussion, C.G. 1986: 31. The final vote on the vow formula was 84 to 14 in favor, with 8 abstentions. C.G. 1986: 32.

77. There was much discussion as to how to translate the French *oraison*. The traditional translation is "mental prayer." This, however, conjured up some negative experiences from the past. In discussion among the English-speaking delegates at the Chapter, it was suggested to follow the French and simply translate the word as "prayer." That would create ambiguity with vocal prayer. Someone suggested "meditative prayer" to avoid both the ambiguity and the negative associations with the older term. "Meditation" was the term finally chosen for the English texts, despite the realization that meditation is only one part of what constitutes *oraison* in the Founder's method. In view of the sacramental dimension of the Eucharist, there was some dispute over the Founder's reference to this prayer as the "principal daily exercise." It should be noted, however, that the Founder never refers to the daily Eucharist as one of the "exercises." It has its own independent and intrinsic value in the prayer life of the community.

78. An intervention on the part of Brother John, the Superior, made it clear that this was the intent of the Commission. Noted in the minutes for May 26, C.G. 1986: 41. The minutes also note the preference of the Rule Commission of the Chapter for the draft text that provided for meditation but not as a mandated community exercise.

79. There was momentary consternation when the delegate from Poland made a motion to extend the norm from two to three hours. This provoked a series of interventions on the dangers of trying to legislate in this matter. One of the most telling was made by Brother Thomas Caldwell, Visitor of Baltimore, who recounted his personal experience of rediscovering the role of prayer in his own life once the legal requirements were taken away.

80. The Lucan account was chosen because Luke locates the discourse on service in the context of the institution of the Eucharist, much in the same

way that the Gospel of John joins the washing of the feet with the discourse at the last supper. Ministry or service thus takes on a sacramental aspect tied to the Eucharist.

81. This demand came from some of the sub-Districts who had no representative of their own at the Chapter in 1986, although Delegations with far fewer Brothers were represented. While this principle seems fair and equitable, in putting the emphasis on representation by local units, it effectively makes it impossible for Brothers in leadership roles in national or international service to be elected to the Chapter. Similarly, since most units have only one representative who is almost always the local superior, it turns the Chapter into a Visitors' meeting with little or no representation from the young Brothers or the Brothers working in ministry.

82. Both in dialogue with the Rule Commission preparing the Draft prior to the Chapter and during the Chapter itself, the outgoing Superior and the General Council insisted strongly, based on their experience, that every region be required to have a full-time canonical superior. The Government Commission of the Chapter, vigorously led by its President, Brother Peter Clifford, remained adamant in rejecting this proposal in the Draft and substituted instead a text similar to that of the 1976 Book of Government allowing the region to determine the type of leadership. The insistence on a regional superior was interpreted by the Commission as a violation of subsidiarity with the specter of a return to the Regional Assistant looming in the background. Brother Pablo, who was still Superior at the time, made a strong plea during the debate for the draft text, but the text of the Government Commission was accepted by a vote of 66 to 37. See the minutes for May 9, C.G. 1986: 18.

83. These suggestions have since been incorporated into the *Administrators' Directory*, published in 1989, and the *Guide to Formation*, published in 1991.

84. *A Message from the Capitulants of the 41st General Chapter of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*, dated at Rome, June 4, 1986. The italics are in the printed text. The text is also reproduced in Bulletin #229.

85. The discussion is reported in the minutes for May 31, C.G. 1986: 58. The text can be found in Bulletin #229.

86. Brother Mark Murphy of the San Francisco District was largely responsible for taking the initiative in this project and seeing it to a successful conclusion.

87. The tune was that of "Old Hundredth," known to most Americans as "Praise God from whom all Blessings Flow."

88. The capitulants were told to expect a delay of at least a year before any response from the Vatican Congregation could be expected. Events moved much more quickly. The Rule was submitted to the Congregation on June 12, 1986. A generally favorable reply with specific recommendations was received from Archbishop Fagiolo, Secretary of the Congregation, on July 22. In succeeding months of 1986 the dialogue between the Institute and CRIS continued with concessions on both sides. The principal changes consisted in having many of the articles approved by the Chapter as statutes placed among the constitutions. The final approval was granted on January 26, the anniversary of the 1725 Bull of Approbation and the feast of the transfer of the relics of Saint De La Salle to Rome. The process of negotiation, with all the relevant correspondence can be found in Circular 424, *Our Rule*, April 30, 1987.

89. The text can be found in Bulletin #229.

9

The Lasallian Institute in Transition

The hope was expressed in the foreword that the recent history of the Institute of the De La Salle Christian Brothers might yield some clues to understand how far it has come and where it may be going. Now that the story of the transitional period has been told, it is appropriate to make some reflections on the meaning of all that has happened to the Institute since World War II, Vatican II, and the 39th General Chapter. In the period immediately after Vatican II, the Brothers were convinced that the Spirit was guiding the Institute, and many are convinced of it now. But it may be that the Spirit has been leading the Institute all along in directions the Brothers would never consciously have chosen for themselves. This reminds us of the oft-quoted statement of Saint John Baptist de La Salle that, had he known at the beginning of his involvement with the teachers where it would lead him, he never would have had the courage to take the first step. This sentiment is echoed in his description of Saint Barnabas, whose faith, the Founder tells us in his meditation, led him to set forth to preach the Gospel like someone going out into the open sea without sail and without oars.

At the conclusion of the 39th General Chapter in 1967, however, the delegates did not think of the Institute as setting forth without sail or oars. Quite the contrary. There was the feeling of a fully equipped ship, set on a course that was clearly charted in precisely worded documents, including an updated experimental Rule and a profoundly challenging Declaration to proclaim the Brother's identity and purpose to the contemporary world.

Among others, two reasons can be advanced as to why the Brothers were not quite so equipped for the journey as they thought. In the first place, the progressive optimism experienced in the Chapter was not the experience of the majority of the Brothers. There was no preparation at the grass roots for the radical character of the change that was underway. After the Chapter in 1967 no adequate educational program communicated to the Brothers generally the concrete significance for their lives of the Chapter's program for adaptation and renewal. Lulled into indifference by a long tradition of passive response to chapter decisions, the Districts, communities, and individual Brothers were ill-prepared to cope with the initiative that was being handed over to them by a new and revolutionary kind of Chapter.

A second reason may have been that, even for the delegates, the decisions of the Renewal Chapter, as it came to be called, were perceived as the end term of a process rather than a beginning. The revised experimental Rule and the Declaration were thought to provide adequate motivation for the Brothers to lead a responsible religious life in a changing world, to establish stable structures of government based on the principle of subsidiarity, and to remove all questions about the nature, purpose, and identity of the Institute—and the Brother—in the modern world. Subsequent events have shown that the significance of the Chapter of 1966–1967 lies, rather, in the fact that these questions were raised rather than definitively answered.

Since the longest part of the narrative recounted here concentrates on the watershed decisions of the 39th General Chapter in 1966–1967, it might be appropriate to comment in some detail on four decisions of that Chapter which have effectively set the Lasallian Institute on a journey whose course no one at the time could foresee and whose end is not yet in sight. These are the adoption of the principle of subsidiarity in government; the election of Brother Charles Henry, a Brother from the United States, as Superior General; the rejection of the ordained priesthood as an option for some Brothers; and the formal reception by the Institute of the teaching of Vatican II on religious life. Now, at a distance of some 25 years, it is possible to understand better the impact that each of these decisions has had on the subsequent history of the Institute, and what prospects they continue to hold out for the future.

Subsidiarity

So many complaints about imposed uniformity and centralized authority were circulating in the early days of the 1966 Chapter, and position papers of such substance had been prepared, especially by the Brothers in the United States, that the Chapter was led very early on to adopt the principle that subsidiarity would determine the reorganized structure for the government of the Institute. Then the Vicar General said at the time, “All we need now is good strong superiors to enforce it!” That proved to be a prophetic remark in light of the subsequent failure to appreciate the intent and the implications of the principle. For some, it was interpreted in the language of the time as “do your own thing”; for others, it meant that the tyranny of the center was replaced by tyranny at the local level.

In any case, it did not take long for the traditional structures to collapse. Superiors often found themselves powerless to act, while individual preference became a crucial factor in determining both prayer life and apostolic work. In the view of some observers, this

collapse of traditional structures, together with the rationale that supported them, is the principal reason why so many Brothers asked for dispensations from their vows in the years following the Chapter. The older style of formation had put a heavy emphasis on institutional conformity. Once the institutional structures were dismantled, it is no wonder that the religious formation centered on structures started to collapse as well. It used to be said, "You keep the Rule and the Rule will keep you." For those who accepted that, what was there to keep them, when the old Rule was no longer there to be kept?

Another melancholy result of the turn to subsidiarity was the collapse of the external practices and symbols that bound the Institute together: a daily prayer schedule more or less the same in every part of the world, the school apostolate in a Brothers' school as the typical and only outlet for apostolic zeal, uniform and carefully monitored programs of formation, the traditional habit, and the anonymity of "religious" names. By the time the delegates assembled for the Chapter of 1976, it was evident that for many years, a superficial conformity and uniformity had concealed fundamental differences based on language and culture as well as substantial disagreement on how the Church and the Institute ought to adapt to an evolving and increasingly secular world.

Painful as these results of subsidiarity were at the time, they constituted an important experience of suffering and purification. They also set in motion a process, still underway, of rebuilding a better structure to help the Institute fulfill its mission. The Chapter of 1976, for all its divisive hesitancy in other matters, did manage to affirm community at every level as the locus for reform and revitalization. That Chapter replaced the misunderstood language of subsidiarity by a call to coresponsibility. In 1986 the concept was updated and expanded to include the idea of interdependence.

Much has yet to be done before all the ramifications of subsidiarity and interdependence are understood and implemented. The experience of the Institute has shown that not all Districts have the resources, and not all communities have the will, to make subsidiarity work. Not many Brothers are eager now to surrender the independence they have come to enjoy in the use of money and the choice of assignment. On the international level there has yet to be established a universally acceptable way for the center of the Institute in Rome to monitor and provide mutual support among the regions of the Institute. Some Districts are fairly self-sufficient while others are caught in a situation and tradition of almost total dependency.

One specific decision of the 1976 Chapter related to subsidiarity that constitutes a challenge to the Brothers, and holds some hope for

the future of the Institute, is the mandated Community Annual Program. Already a source of community renewal in many places, and still perhaps an underutilized instrument in others, the CAP program, as it is called, strengthened by a recommended program of personal renewal, is now an integral part of the 1987 Rule on Community Life. This structured opportunity for the Brothers to search out together the will of God in the local situation is the best guarantee that all the language of subsidiarity, coresponsibility, and interdependence will eventually be translated into the lived experience of brotherhood.

Brother Charles Henry, Internationalization

A second significant event in the Renewal Chapter of 1966 was the election of Brother Charles Henry to become the first Superior General who was not French. The election of an American Superior was indeed a source of pride for the Brothers of the United States, happy to provide such a well-educated and humanly accessible man of faith and zeal to lead the Institute into the post-Vatican II era. As time went on, the satisfaction became universal and was reinforced by the enthusiasm and affection that Brothers all over the world felt for Brother Charles during the ten years he was in office.

That landmark election has a special significance, however, one that continues long after the event and holds promise for the future, in that the Institute thereby effectively embraced its international character. In an era when ecclesiologists are holding out hope for the emergence of a world Church, while Christians in Asia, Africa, and the Americas wait impatiently for the Church to de-Europeanize and de-Romanize, our Institute has long since become a world Institute in its leadership, its structure, and its vision for the future.

In this connection it is appropriate to recognize the contribution that Brother Charles Henry himself made to this process. Instead of Americanizing the Institute as many expected, the *aggringamento* as one young Mexican Brother called it, this American Superior set about internationalizing it. No sooner was he chosen Superior General than he distanced himself gently but effectively from the American delegates who had used every legitimate strategy to get him elected. His Vicar General was Spanish, his closest advisers were French and Belgian, his playmates were Irish, English, and Canadian, he nominated the first Australian ever to become an Assistant, and Italian became the language and the lifestyle of the generalate. About the only signs of an American influence in Rome were the newly constructed tennis courts and the installation of showers in the bedrooms.

Brother Charles brought the Institute out of its ghetto in other ways. He became actively involved in the Union of Superiors General

in Rome and helped to found a new organization of religious institutes involved in missionary work. He gave strong and effective support to institutes of religious women in their struggle for an equal voice in the Vatican deliberations pertaining to religious life. Above all, through long and exhausting journeys, he brought the Institute to the Brothers in places where no Superior General had ever been. He affirmed and exemplified the missionary character of the Institute. In third world countries he became the confidant and adviser of bishops, who appreciated his evident respect for the indigenous culture and the opportunities that he saw for the Institute in its educational ministry to serve the Church in the work of evangelization. Finally, he paved the way for the election of a forceful and very different personality, Brother José Pablo Basterrechea, a Basque, to succeed him as Superior.

The election, then, of this American Brother, which at the time was touted as the end of an era, was in reality the beginning of a new one. Ever since, no Superior General has ever been able to stay for very long at his desk in Rome. Not only do the Superior and his Council move around themselves, they have become pretty forceful as well in moving the Brothers around to places where they are needed most. The generalate has become an international and polyglot center where Brothers from anywhere in the world can feel at home while they discover, at the same time, that brotherhood cuts across linguistic, cultural, and even gender barriers. The implications of the increased awareness of the global character of the Institute and its mission have yet to run their course, as the center of gravity in the Institute begins to shift from Western Europe and North America to the Districts in the Southern hemisphere.

Priesthood and Identity

Another landmark decision of the 39th General Chapter was the formal rejection of the option of the priesthood for some Brothers and the consequent reaffirmation of the exclusively lay character of the Institute. The story of the events surrounding that decision has been told in an earlier chapter. The significance of the decision lies not so much in the matter of the priesthood itself as in the subsequent issues to which the debate gave rise. Once again, a decision that seemed to put an end to a question, served ultimately to raise more questions than it answered.

The Commission of the 1966 Chapter entrusted with studying the apostolic finality of the Institute realized from the start that it was not enough simply to reject the priesthood. What was needed was a more positive statement on the identity of the Brother and the mission of

the Institute in the modern world. After months of intensive discussion, including extensive testing, debate, and compromise, the result was the remarkable document entitled *The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today: A Declaration*.

Despite some of its dated language, it is a mistake to think of the Declaration as a dated document. As Brother Charles Henry wrote in his introduction, "It is in the light of the Declaration that we must read and understand the other texts of our General Chapter, including the Rule and the Constitutions." The definitive Rule of 1987 is but the end term of the process of renewed self-definition that has the Declaration as its foundation and point of departure. It should come as no surprise to find how many of the principles enunciated in the 1987 Rule are anticipated and developed in the Declaration. That is why it is true to say that to understand the Declaration is to understand the Rule as it defines the identity and the mission of the Brother.

After more than a quarter-century, it may still be asked to what extent the Declaration has taken hold of the Brothers. The deliberations of the two General Chapters held since the Declaration was published are evidence enough that an unfinished agenda remains. The Declaration, for example, states unequivocally that the purpose of the Institute is apostolic, a word heavily laden with theological overtones, as the Founder understood so well. But evangelization, which embodies the same idea, would not have surfaced at the 1986 Chapter with such urgency, if the Brothers did not need to be reminded that all of their educational activity must in some concrete way contribute to the spread of the Gospel.

The central section of the Declaration defines the vocation of the Brother as the integration of the three elements that are now incorporated into article 10 of the 1987 Rule. Yet there still seem to be Brothers "out there" who live as hermits, within or outside a community. One can still hear Brothers argue that their work is their prayer, that they need very little else to express their religious consecration, except perhaps to remain celibate. Even more prevalent are the Brothers who work very hard and follow the community prayer schedule, but rarely make explicit the connection between the two. There might be fewer cases of what is called burn-out, if the flame and energy were more evenly distributed.

The final and longest section of the Declaration deals with three specific aspects of the apostolic ministry of education: service of the poor, teaching religion, the school and ministries apart from the school. If anything, the problems in all three areas have become more acute over the last 25 years. The Brothers have become much more sensitive about the need to serve the poor, but do not always agree

on how to devote personnel to this work without abandoning the schools. The need today for adequate training in theology and religious education has led to a situation where relatively few Brothers want to teach religion. As the Institute opens itself to wider possibilities for educational ministry beyond the school and the classroom, there is reason to be concerned that the tradition of high standards of scholarship and effective teaching may be lost as more Brothers opt for assignments in administration and counseling or diocesan and parish ministry.

It is precisely in these areas—the service of the poor, the survival of the schools, teaching religion, and ministries apart from the school—that the Institute is experiencing the most painful ambiguity. Here the Institute is caught somewhere between where it has been and where it may be going. It could be argued that the 39th General Chapter, and the Declaration in particular, are part of the reason for the ambiguity about the specifics of the apostolic and educational mission. That may be true. It may even be true that it will be necessary some day to produce a document entitled *Beyond the Declaration*. Meanwhile the Brothers can still find addressed in the Declaration many of today's most urgent problems and enduring principles to help deal with them effectively.

It is well to remember that the Declaration, with its rich analysis of the apostolic mission and identity of the Brother, was elaborated as a result of the rejection of the priesthood. In the subsequent General Chapters, that issue remained dead. Priesthood had to be relegated to an ad hoc commission in the Chapter of 1976; in the 1986 Chapter the subject was barely mentioned. The positive result has been a better understanding of the lay character of the Institute and the unique part it can play for a more effective role of the laity in church life and ministry. Meanwhile, despite the reluctance of Roman authorities to open the question, support has been growing for admitting women and married persons to ordination. When and if that happens, the Institute may have to take another look at its exclusion of the priesthood. Such a change in church discipline, however, might be an even greater reason for the Institute to leave the ordained ministry to others and to stay with its special mission of evangelization, especially of the poor, through what the Brothers do best—teaching.

Vatican Council II

A fourth decision derived from the Chapter of 1966–1967 concerns the directives from Vatican II on the renewal of religious life. The Council gave religious institutes three norms to guide the work of renewal: the signs of the times, the Gospel, and the charism of the Founder. The

General Chapter, in turn, consciously and conscientiously pursued its agenda on the basis of these principles. In one sense the impact of Vatican II illuminates the beginning of an unprecedented transition for the Brothers' Institute, as well as for religious life and church life in general. From another point of view, the forces set in motion by that Council have yet to run their course. The three sources proposed by the Council for renewal make understandable most of what has happened in the transition thus far. There is good reason to suppose that the same three sources—the signs of the times, the Gospel, and the Founder—can help chart the course to follow as the Institute faces the challenges that still lie ahead.

The signs of the times in the last decade of this century are in some ways the same but in other ways very different from what they were in the mid-sixties. What is God trying to tell the Institute today in the signs of these times? There are the global issues following the end of the cold war, the missionary vigor and militant stance of Islam, new threats to the earth's environment, the medical and moral dimensions of the AIDS epidemic and the abortion controversy. Other signs of these times challenge the Brothers more directly. Is it possible that hidden within the vocation crisis is something that the Spirit is telling the Institute about the traditional structure of church ministry and the active religious life? Is divine Providence trying to convey some message concerning our religious brotherhood in the vitality of the feminist movement and the growing sensitivity to women's issues? Has the spirit of faith motivated the Brothers, as it should, to look upon all these developments in view only of what God wants?

One of the best indications that the Institute is at least trying to read the signs of the times is the development of what is called the Lasallian Family. Here is a perfect example of an idea that is deeply rooted in the tradition of association inherited from the Founder, now updated and expanded to respond to the signs of the times. The Brothers realize that they can no longer carry on their educational mission by themselves, much less continue to be the sole carriers bringing the vision of the Founder into the future.

Some say that this movement has come about because of the limited numbers and advancing age of the Brothers. But there might be more here than a question of manpower, or even personpower. As the Institute broadens the meaning of association to include not only its educational mission but also community life and a unique Lasallian spirituality, lay men and women now join with the Brothers in a common search for a deeper understanding of the Lasallian tradition and ways to preserve and transmit it. As this movement goes forward, there is no telling what impact it may have on the structure of the

Institute in the future. It seems inevitable that sooner or later new and appropriate institutional forms will have to be developed to express the reality of what it means today to be a follower of John Baptist de La Salle.

In addition to the signs of the times, Vatican II also asked the Institute to undertake renewal on the basis of the Gospel as the first and principal Rule. It seems true to say that the Brothers are beginning to hear the Gospel more attentively, to ponder it more deeply, and to take more seriously the concrete implications of its message. In the most recent Chapter the theme of evangelization was emphasized as the central element in the educational ministry. The 1987 Rule goes farther when it suggests that the Brothers can become effective evangelizers for others only when they themselves become thoroughly evangelized. That does not happen merely by listening to the Gospel. The Lasallian educators must allow themselves, as the Rule suggests, to be evangelized by those they serve and by the cry of those whom the Institute cannot serve because it does not have the will or the resources to do so.

Finally, Vatican II mandates each institute to recover the charism of its Founder. This is another element in the life of the Lasallian Institute that has developed significantly over the last 25 years, one that holds both hope and challenges for the future. One way to measure the extent of that development is to compare the experimental Rule adopted by the Chapter in 1967 with the definitive Rule approved in 1987. Although the Chapter in 1967 was certainly aware of the need to recover the Founder's charism, little in the text of the Rule adopted at that time reflects its specifically Lasallian character. To read and study the Rule of 1987, however, is to see how thoroughly, in the intervening years, the person and the thought of John Baptist de La Salle have penetrated the mind and heart of the Body of the Institute.

The vitalizing force of the charism of the Founder is not limited to the text of the Rule. Throughout the Institute worldwide there is a discernible enthusiasm for rediscovering, or discovering for the first time, the riches to be found in the life, the work, the writings, and the vision of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Despite all the regional and cultural differences, despite the structures of self-determination and subsidiarity, it seems that it is more and more the Founder who serves as the principal bond of unity holding the Institute together.

This recovery of the Founder has substance and depth, thanks to the program of Lasallian studies providentially set in motion by the foresight of Brother Maurice Hermans as long ago as the Chapter of 1956. It has been carried through by the diligent research and reflection of Brothers such as Léon Aroz, Yves Poutet, Jean Pungier, Michel

Sauvage, Miguel Campos, Saturnino Gallego, and more recently Jean-Guy Rodrigue, and Léon Lauraire. The program of Lasallian Studies and the Christian Brothers Publications program sponsored by the Christian Brothers Conference of the United States and Toronto Region is making the best of this material available to English-speaking Brothers.

Now that research and reflection have produced such impressive results, and as translations and thematic studies of the results become increasingly available, the process of dissemination and assimilation of the Founder's characteristic genius must continue and even be intensified. The need now is for new talent, especially some younger Brothers, to become involved in this work at every level. A movement that holds so much promise for the Institute and the whole Lasallian family should not be allowed at this point to lose its momentum.

Quo vadis?

Using the events of World War II and Vatican II as a starting point, the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools has been in a period of transition for the last half-century. Where is it going? Is it diminishing in size and effectiveness, as the aging of the Brothers and their fewer numbers would suggest? Or is it, in reality, growing in size and effectiveness as the dynamism of the Lasallian family movement begins to take hold? To what extent is the Institute still in a period of transition, still in some sense at sea without sail and without oars, to use again the Founder's image of Saint Barnabas? If the Founder's use of that metaphor was, as seems certain, somewhat autobiographical, then there is good reason to hope that the Institute, in a similar situation, will find its way to home port. The analysis thus far has suggested that the decisions taken by the Body of the Institute in its recent General Chapters have provided at least a set of charts for the course into the unknown that lies ahead. Looking at these charts, the delegates at the General Chapter of 1986 came to the conclusion that perhaps it was time to change course. The word they used was conversion, a personal conversion in the Brothers, and a conversion of the educational institutions and activities of the Institute.

The metaphor can be developed a bit further. Even if the bark of the Institute has a good set of charts and is willing to change course, if it remains without sails or oars where does the motive power come from to gain headway? There can be only one answer, and that is the wind, the spirit, the spirit of faith and zeal inspired by the Spirit of God breathing over the waters. The breezes still blowing from Vatican

II challenge the Brothers to read the signs of these times, to live the Gospel, and to find in the charism of the Founder the faith and zeal to be open to the Spirit. The Spirit who breathes where the Spirit wills may be driving the Institute into waters where it would not otherwise have the courage to go.

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