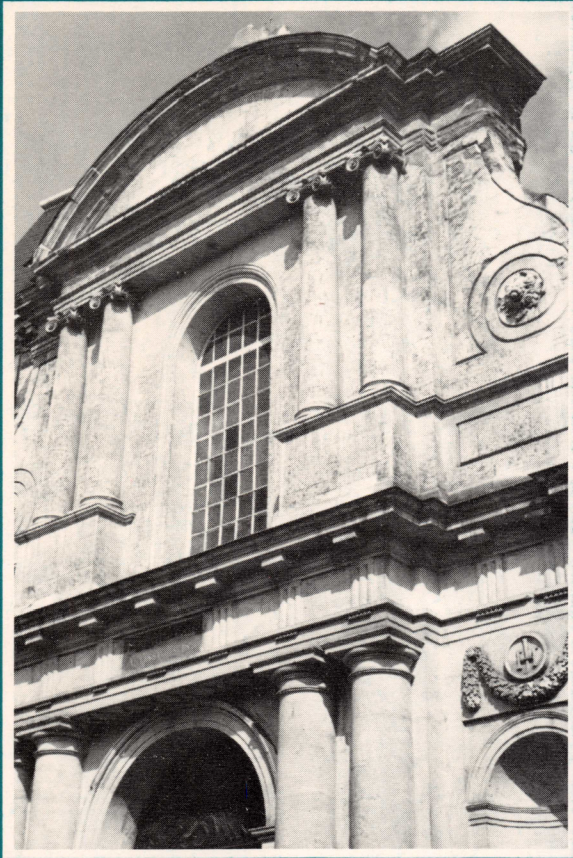
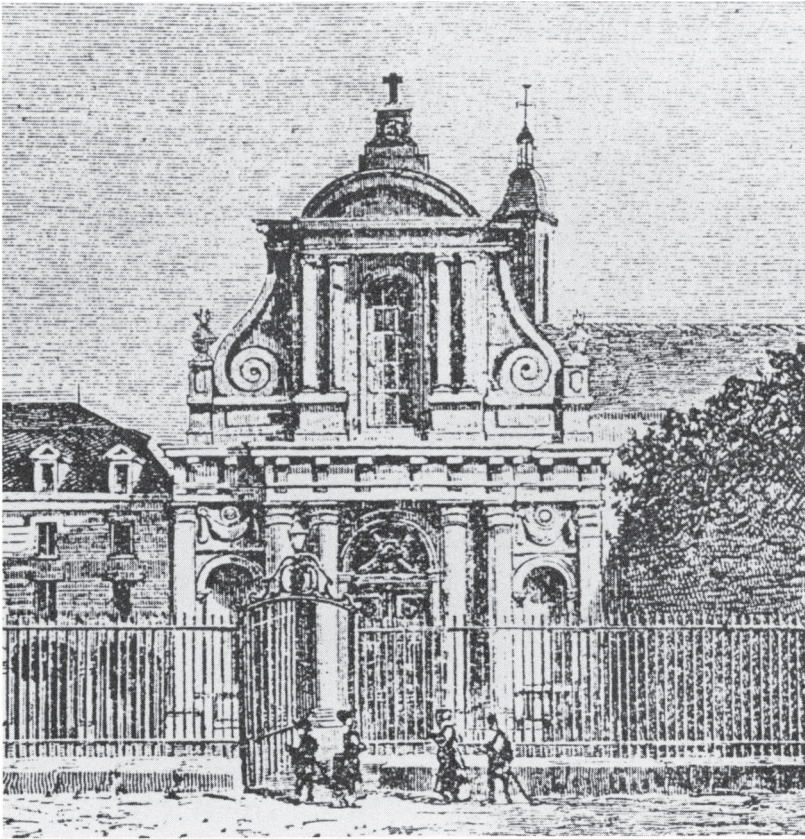


John Baptist de La Salle  
and  
Special Education  
*A Study of Saint Yon*



Othmar Würth, FSC

**John Baptist de La Salle**  
**and**  
**Special Education**  
*A Study of Saint Yon*



**The main entrance of Saint Yon, fronting on Rue Saint Julien, with the chapel and a section of one of the school buildings. From an early engraving.**

**John Baptist de La Salle**  
**and**  
**Special Education**  
*A Study of Saint Yon*

by  
Othmar Würth, FSC

Translated by Augustine Loes, FSC  
Adapted by Francis Huether, FSC  
Edited by Bonaventure Miner, FSC

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### ***Lasallian Publications***

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Cover: The main entrance at Saint Yon today.

To be effective your teaching must be supported by your example.  
This must be one of the chief characteristics of your work.

John Baptist de La Salle  
(CL 1: 61)



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# Abbreviations

**ADSM** Archives, Seine-Maritime Department, Rouen, France

**AMG** Archives, Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Rome, Italy

**CL** *Cahiers Lasalliens*. An ongoing series of publications of studies, texts, and documents concerned with John Baptist de La Salle, his life, writings, and religious and pedagogical ideas. These publications also focus on the early decades of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the society which John Baptist de La Salle founded in 1680.



# Foreword

## Foreword by the Translator

The original manuscript of this work was published as volume 15 of *Lasallianum*, November 1972, under the title, *La pédagogie de Jean-Baptiste de La Salle: Une contribution historique à l'orthopédagogie*. It had been presented to the *Institut de pédagogie curative* of the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, by Brother Othmar Würth, FSC, in partial fulfillment for a degree in education. This English edition has been translated, adapted, and published with the permission of the author.

The study has a special value for its analysis of the timeless principles and practices of remedial education and social rehabilitation set forth in the writings of John Baptist de La Salle and in the programs of the house of Saint Yon in Rouen. The study presents in English for the first time a comprehensive description of that house of correction and detention, founded by De La Salle in 1705 and conducted by the Brothers of the Christian Schools until the French Revolution in 1790.

The translation has benefited from the suggestions made by several Brothers who carefully read the manuscript: Brothers Colman Coogan, FSC; Francis Huether, FSC; Norman McCarthy, FSC; Bonaventure Miner, FSC; Luke Salm, FSC; and Paul Walsh, FSC.

The task of preparing this manuscript was also greatly assisted with additional information from Brother Othmar himself and from Brother Maurice-Auguste Hermans, FSC, general editor of *Lasallianum*. Special thanks are due to Brother William Spellman who, as Provincial of the New York Province of Christian Brothers, greatly aided this project. Thanks are also due to Mrs. Bonnie Walsh and Mrs. Carol Hamm for their secretarial assistance, and to Brother Joseph Schmidt, FSC, Executive Director of Lasallian Publications.

Brother Augustine Loes, FSC  
De La Salle Hall, Lincroft, N.J.  
September 8, 1986

## Foreword by the Editor

The liturgical calendar celebrates the feast of Saint John Baptist de La Salle on April 7, commemorating his death in 1719 at the house of Saint Yon.

Saint Yon is a property of approximately 17 acres lying, in the eighteenth century, on the outskirts of the city of Rouen, northwest of

Paris. Although the property was purchased by the Brothers in 1718, just a year before De La Salle's death, the Brothers had been renting it since 1705 and using it as a boarding school as well as a school for delinquents. With the transfer of the Brothers' novitiate from Vaugirard, Paris, to Saint Yon and with the establishment on the same location of both a teacher-training center and a place of retreat and retirement, the Rouen site had by 1719 become the heart of the religious and educational enterprise of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Institute of Brothers had developed from an initial group of teachers which De La Salle established in 1680. By the time of the Founder's death, the Institute had spread throughout France and included about 100 Brothers attached to 22 houses, caring for some 5,000 pupils. Saint Yon was the Institute's first Motherhouse and the establishment in which the Brothers' work best illustrates their efforts to address specifically the needs of children requiring special education.

In view of the important role which Saint Yon played in the history of the Brothers and in the history of special education in France, it comes as something of a surprise to learn that when Brother Othmar Würth turned to Saint Yon as the best illustration of De La Salle's contribution to special education, he could find no study of that establishment other than by Brothers themselves or by persons closely involved with them. There were only a few occasional papers, such as those by the nineteenth century historian Charles de Beaurepaire and his contemporary Periaux, author of a geographical dictionary. Canon Farcy's more specific but limited study of Saint Yon itself has, so far, been the only such study to appear in this century, except for a more recent and brief survey, *Histoire du Manoir de Saint-Yon*, which, presented as an address by Counselor Thibaud to the Appeals Court of Rouen, has gone almost unnoticed. Members of De La Salle's own worldwide Institute of Brothers and their associates have had to be content with the references to Saint Yon included in the works of Canon John Baptist Blain and other early biographers of De La Salle.

On the level of general education, the traditional views of the Institute's early development as found in these biographers have been both challenged and broadened. The French historian Henri Daniel-Rops, for instance, places De La Salle's achievements within the larger matrix of the spiritual and charitable forces set in motion by persons like Saint Vincent de Paul. The Cambridge historian, H. O. Evennett, identifies the Institute with "the last ripples of the Counter-Reformation in France," and, like Daniel-Rops, is impressed with the apostolic, as contrasted with the contemplative, features of De La Salle's foundation.

More recently, Bardet's study of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century

Rouen places the enterprises both of De La Salle and of Adrien Nyel, his first associate in the schools, into the larger picture of the growth of literacy and the development of the social classes which derived the most benefit from *l'enseignement charitable*. Finally, in an extensive treatment of education in France from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, Roger Chartier and his coauthors have investigated the social origins of De La Salle's early followers as compared with the origins of those attracted to the community of a slightly earlier contemporary, Charles Démia, the founder of *Les écoles de Lyon*.

Commendable as Brother Othmar's initiative undoubtedly was under the circumstances, it could not of itself overcome at least two limitations in historical methodology. In the first place, as the author readily admits, the originality of an establishment such as that at Saint Yon must be viewed in relation to what already existed. He decided at the outset of his study, however, that an extensive investigation of that kind was beyond his purpose. We may conclude, therefore, that any presumption that the Brothers at Saint Yon made pioneer contributions in the kind of special education they provided at Saint Yon is to be accepted as a provisional deduction based upon internal evidence only.

A second limitation of methodology in this study derives from the historical material itself. The author points out that nearly all the documents available, at least those that related to the house of detention, are later than 1750. One particular consequence of this is that the attempt to use the Saint Yon establishment to illustrate De La Salle's principles has to proceed very much on inference. Under ideal conditions, perhaps, a procedure based on inference could make the case at least plausible, but the circumstances in this instance are less than ideal. Some of the documentary evidence pertaining to the Brothers' administration of Saint Yon is, in fact, severely critical. Although not vitiating the overall picture, which reveals the competence and devotion of the Brothers in this specialized apostolate, the negative element, nonetheless, tends at times to obscure how De La Salle's original vision and principles were implemented at Saint Yon during successive administrations.

Notwithstanding these limitations, perhaps even because of them, Brother Othmar's present study may itself be regarded as a pioneering venture. Whatever may be said concerning the more obvious deficiencies in the documentary sources available to him, the fact remains that his own effort to make the best of what there is constitutes a new perspective from which to view De La Salle's contribution to education. An understanding of the Brothers' handling of situations resulting from the various maladjustments of the youth at Saint Yon gives us a glimpse well beyond the view gained from De La Salle's early biographers of how his

spirit, which pervaded the Institute, was adapted by the Brothers to meet new challenges.

In short, what Brother Othmar has done so well is to take advantage of the rapidly growing interest in special education which grew out of the affluent 1960's and early 1970's on both sides of the Atlantic, to challenge anew the Brothers of the Christian Schools to vindicate the papal declaration of John Baptist de La Salle as "the patron of all teachers."

Brother Bonaventure Miner, FSC

## A Note on the Adaptation

To bring the results of the research done by Brother Othmar to a wider body of readers than might have been reached by a university thesis, and with the consent, advice, and cooperation of the author, the Editorial Board of Lasallian Publications is publishing this adapted version of Brother Othmar's original text.

The entire text has been reorganized to provide a clearer and more focused presentation for the English-speaking reader. The extensive documentation of the original manuscript has been reduced and simplified and the sources have, for the most part, been summarized by the editor in a commentary at the beginning of each part, under the title Source Material. Specific references to *Cahiers Lasalliens* and to other works more readily available have, however, been retained.

Two sections have been added to the original work. Chapter 9 briefly brings to a close the history of Saint Yon, and Appendix B contains a partial list of places where Brothers and their associates have been working in the Saint Yon tradition.

A list of readings has also been provided.

Brother Francis Huether, FSC



# Introduction

A great deal has already been written concerning the work of John Baptist de La Salle in regard to the education of poor children who were limited both economically and socially. But these studies have, for the most part, overlooked the contribution of De La Salle and his Brothers to the special education of children who, in particular, have been handicapped emotionally and intellectually, or who have been damaged by a destructive moral environment, regardless of their economic class.

This essay is an attempt to remedy that oversight. Educators concerned with special education will be interested in De La Salle's analyses of maladjusted children and his proposed solutions. For the Brothers of the Christian Schools, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding of one element of what De La Salle was trying to accomplish in responding to the needs of maladjusted children, a work which his Institute continues even to this day.

The study begins with a brief account of the life of John Baptist de La Salle in the context of the society in which he was raised and lived, the experiences which influenced his thought and practice, and the educational systems which prevailed in his time and which he labored to improve.

The study then turns to De La Salle's ideas and practices as they can be applied to the care of the maladjusted child. The categories that he identified in his educational writings are subsumed under several groupings more in keeping with current terminology, and the practices he recommended are reinterpreted in terms of current practices.

The major part of the study is a description of the special programs at the Manor of Saint Yon, where De La Salle established a boarding school, a place of correction for juveniles, and a house of detention for youths and adult males ordinarily sentenced to the city prison.

Initially this study was to have been more psychological and pedagogical than historical, in the expectation that abundant published materials would make it unnecessary to research the original sources, a task for a professional historian. Unfortunately, except for a fragmentary study by Charles A. de Beaurepaire entitled *La maison de force de Saint-Yon et le Parlement de Normandie* (1946), and a short work, the *Manoir de Saint Yon* (1936), by Canon Farcy, intended for a popular audience, there was no adequately researched study of the manuscript sources. It became necessary, then, to search for original documents in the departmental and municipal archives of Rouen and at the archives of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Rome.

The hope that some document might be discovered describing in a systematic fashion the educational ideas of the Brothers of Saint Yon on the topic of rehabilitation was never realized. The *Regulation of the House of Detention (Règlement de la pension de force)* did not live up to expectations, giving only a schedule, lists of duties and responsibilities, and a few educational directives. It is regrettable that nearly all the other documents available that relate to the house of detention are dated later than 1750. It should be remembered, however, that in composing these documents, the followers of John Baptist de La Salle were content, as was he, to be pragmatic. The Brothers did not spell out their educational ideas before they had had decades of experimentation and experience, a typical Lasallian dynamic, and therefore these records, though of a later period, are reliable indicators of earlier practice, though not of early educational theory.

In addition, insights into the daily life of Saint Yon can be found in the biography of De La Salle, written by Canon Blain, who had been chaplain there. The biography was published in Rouen in 1733 and was therefore available to contemporaries who had been part of the foundation and development of Saint Yon and could verify what Blain had written. Furthermore, the testimony in 1782 of Brother Agathon, Superior General of the Brothers, that administrations at Saint Yon had always been faithful to the practices established by De La Salle for dealing with disturbed and troubled youth, offers assurance that later practices there did reflect early traditions.

This study, then, attempts to bring to light a program in special education worked out at Saint Yon between 1705 and 1792, to meet the particular and continuing needs of disturbed youths. At the same time the study also suggests that the insights, principles, and organization which De La Salle developed for the education of troubled and maladjusted children have a relevance even in our own day.

Brother Othmar Würth, FSC  
Zurich, Switzerland  
September 1986

**PART ONE**

**John Baptist de La Salle**

## Source Material

The two main sources used for Part One of this study are De La Salle's publication *Conduite des Ecoles chrétiennes* (hereafter referred to as *Conduite*), and the biography of the Founder by the Swiss Brother, Brother Bernard (Jean D'Auge).

In addition, references are made to De La Salle's *Méditations pour les Dimanches et les principales Fêtes de l'année*, Canon Blain's well-known biography of the Founder, and the modern study by Brother André Prévot of the pedagogical principles which characterized the schools of the Institute in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The *Conduite* derives from De La Salle's personal experience extending over some 25 years, with both the schools and the first communities of Brothers. The presently available text is based on the manuscript version of the original of 1706 as well as the printed edition of 1726 (CL 24).

The biography of De La Salle by Brother Bernard—an incomplete work of 86 pages—is entitled, *Conduite admirable de la Divine Providence en la personne du vénérable Serviteur de Dieu Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, prêtre, docteur en théologie, ancien chanoine de l'église cathédrale de Reims et Instituteur des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes*. The available text is based on the manuscript of 1721 (CL 4).

The text of Canon Jean-Baptiste Blain's *La vie de Monsieur Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Instituteur des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes* is based on the Rouen edition of 1733 (CL 8).

De La Salle's meditations on the principal feasts of the year constitute the second part of his *Méditations pour les Dimanches et les principales Fêtes de l'année*. The available text probably comes from a Rouen edition of 1730 (CL 12).

The full title of Brother André Prévot's study, published in Paris, 1964, is *L'enseignement technique chez les Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes au XVIII<sup>e</sup> et au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles*. It is part of *Collection Orientations pédagogiques*.

# 1

## De La Salle: The Man

A study of the personalities of social reformers reveals that some of them begin by developing a philosophy from which their later action springs, while others work in a more pragmatic way, seeking to remedy situations with which they are confronted. John Baptist de La Salle belonged to the second type. "His life," writes Brother Prévot, in his work on the Brothers of the Christian Schools in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "was more concerned with solutions than with theories."

This pragmatic course of action demands the ability to meet and deal with all sorts of unexpected problems and pressures. It also requires adaptation to sudden difficulties almost on an ad hoc basis, often handling as they arise situations which, had they been the subject of extensive preliminary deliberation, would almost certainly have loomed as insuperable obstacles. According to Blain, De La Salle himself remarked that if he had been obliged to anticipate and plan ahead for the long, complex course which his life and work ultimately followed, he would never have started (CL 7: 169).

For a man of faith like De La Salle, divine Providence was the moving force in all he did. He saw God in all things and in all the events of his life. For him "every bush was burning." Faith was exercised through natural gifts, particularly the abilities to analyze thoroughly and quickly, to act decisively, to perceive a need and its remedy, to move firmly and correctly, to profit by experience, his own and that of others, and above all, to act sensitively and courageously on behalf of children.

The biographies of De La Salle are filled with details of his active life, but they rarely address his unusual and practical ability, his grasp of the fundamental issue, his readiness to take risks.

Though we must guard against groundless speculation concerning decisive factors and events that may have had special significance in De La Salle's development, we do, in fact, know enough of his early family experience to recognize elements in his home life that shaped his personality. John Baptist de La Salle was born in 1651 in Reims, France. His family combined a profound Catholic faith and deep piety with considerable wealth and social position. His father was a lawyer and jurist, while his mother, Nicolle Moët de Bruillet, was a daughter of a family prominent for centuries in the history and politics of Reims. John Baptist grew up in a world of faith and Church on the one hand, and wealth, commerce, and law on the other. His personal world was part of the world



**John Baptist de La Salle, portrait by Pierre Léger, 1734.**

of Louis XIV, the Sun King (1638–1715), a world of extravagance and opulence, hierarchical structure, and rigid social classes, an elite enclave in a world of hunger, poverty, and idleness.

Faith and his devout Catholic upbringing drew De La Salle early to the priesthood, a vocation for which he found no opposition, though he was the eldest son. His mother and his grandmother had a great and supportive influence upon him. Throughout his life faith led him to perceive the workings of the Holy Spirit, and he saw himself as invariably moved by the action of Divine Providence. His biographer, Brother Bernard, records that late in life, reflecting on his gradual involvement with the Brothers in the free parish schools, De La Salle wrote, “God . . . did this in a way that was entirely imperceptible . . . without my having foreseen any of it from the start” (CL 4: 33).

His seminary studies in Paris were interrupted by the death of his father, but eventually he was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Reims. He retained a lifelong responsibility for the management of some of the family affairs.

His early life as canon of the Cathedral followed the well-established pattern of a comfortable clerical career in a Church where religious congregations directly involved in the needs of the common people were developing. But the prospect of a regular life in a long and esteemed tradition in the Church was soon altered.

At the request of Canon Nicolas Roland, his friend and spiritual counselor, De La Salle served as administrator of a school for girls, where his tenure, though brief, evidently marked him as a good manager with a feeling for education. Then a mutual friend introduced him to Adrien Nyel, and this was to prove the turning point in his life. His involvement with Nyel—a peripatetic pedagogue with a unique vocation for establishing free schools for the very poor—and with Nyel’s work, took De La Salle out of his family home and social class, led him to give away his personal fortune, and radically changed the ultimate direction which he gave to his life in service to people and to the Church.

Adrien Nyel was a native of Laon and had been in charge of the city of Rouen’s hospital system, which included the welfare or dole services for indigent families. He taught the children of these dependent families reading, writing, and catechism, and supervised adolescent apprentices and children living on welfare at the hospital. In him De La Salle met a man of proven commitment to educating the disadvantaged (CL 7: 160).

In the France of the Sun King nearly everyone had an opportunity to obtain some education, though the opportunities were not equal in availability, cost, or quality. Those who could afford it—the wealthy and most of the middle class—attended the *collèges* or the schools of the Writing Masters, or, like the young De La Salle, were provided with tutors. Port

Royal established the select Little Schools. Most parishes maintained some sort of school, often conducted by the priests. And for the very poor there were the charity schools, operated as part of a town's hospital or welfare system, all too often unstable, badly organized, and usually conducted by unprepared, unprofessional teachers.

It is hardly likely that De La Salle early in life was unaware that he had a safe, sheltered existence in the midst of a vast subculture of need. During his seminary days in Paris, while moving about Reims on his duties as canon, even through routine family and social contacts, he must have perceived that an oppressed lower social class existed, marked by poverty, unemployment, hunger, and moral degradation, and that in the midst of that dreadful chaos, conscientious parents struggled to maintain a family and raise their children, children all too often damaged by an environment of brutality, sickness, factory work, and bad moral example.

As he worked with Nyel, De La Salle became convinced that one route, perhaps the only route, for the poor to escape the grinding oppression of poverty and ignorance was through a free, basic, elementary education, with religious instruction as its cornerstone and the trained, dedicated teacher as its agent (CL 24: 187). De La Salle was taken by Nyel's example of service to the poor, and eventually gave up his family, class, wealth, and ecclesiastical career to carry on this work.

Adrien Nyel was a visionary. But he was frequently absent from the schools he established, had little sense of organization and no aptitude for stability or professionalism, and Brother Bernard tells us that De La Salle soon found himself impelled to the practical steps related to the business of running a successful educational enterprise. He quietly began to move toward what would eventually become a large scale, stable, professionally conducted system based principally on the parish school. He found teachers and trained them in both subject matter and methodology. He gave his teachers a conviction that theirs was not merely a job, but a vocation, a special lay ministry in the Church. Responding to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he founded a religious Congregation of vowed laymen who called themselves "Brothers."

De La Salle was particularly sensitive to the emotional trauma and moral deterioration of children. How to deal with the troubled child became an important element in his preparation of teachers. His method of meeting this specialized need is the subject of this present study.

As his ideas developed through an ever-widening experience, De La Salle came to recognize the emotional and behavioral impairment suffered by many children through the pressures of inadequate family life, rigid and limiting social and economic structures, and often poverty. A pioneer



**The restored courtyard of La Cloche, the mansion home of John Baptist de La Salle, off Rue de L'Arbalette, Reims.**

in special education within his resources and experience, guided largely by love for the young, by faith, and by determination, De La Salle strove to help and to educate these handicapped and maladjusted children.

As a consequence of the practical steps De La Salle took, the special characteristics of the Lasallian school developed more and more, and its superiority over other schools became noticeable. The Lasallian school was free and excluded no one. It was Christian in its commitment to the Church, in its policies and practices, and in its emphasis upon religious instruction. The teachers would be competent, trained, and dedicated, the school, well-organized and orderly. In De La Salle's vision Christian education became an instrument for Church and society against the destructive consequences of ignorance and poverty. It was not long before the Brothers' school took a place also in the education of children of other social levels and in service to the state and to other needs (CL 12 II: 138-139).

Lasallian education is rooted in the economic, social, moral, and religious situation of the working class and the poor. In one of his meditations, written for the Brothers years later, De La Salle observed that poverty all too often prevented parents from raising their children properly. Parents, he said, were too busy seeking employment or earning a meager livelihood, while their children were left unsupervised and uneducated until they, too, were compelled to find work. Poverty, he observed, forced parents to leave their children to fend for themselves. "These unfortunate children," he wrote, "accustomed to an idle life for many years, have great difficulty when it comes time for them to seek work" (CL 13: 11-12). In addition, "through bad companions they learn many bad habits which are difficult to stop." Archaic though his language may be, De La Salle's observations nonetheless describe situations which were common in seventeenth-century France and exist almost everywhere today.

To take action when a situation called for it was part of De La Salle's personality. This is evident in the various foundations he developed, in addition to the free school. In 1687, for example, at the urging of the Duke of Mazarin and some country pastors, he opened a training school for teachers working in the rural parishes. A request by King Louis and by the Archbishop of Paris led to the founding of a boarding school for young Irish refugees in 1689. To meet the needs of the parish of Saint Sulpice in Paris, De La Salle in 1699 opened a Christian Academy, a unique Sunday school, both religious and technical, for young men working during the week. At the request of the people as well as the Church and civic authorities of Rouen, De La Salle established at Saint Yon three very different kinds of residential educational programs, supported by fees and tuition.

## 2

# De La Salle: The Educator

The concept of the popular, tuition-free school, open to all, was not original with De La Salle: he worked largely within the older tradition of the parish free school. His real originality lay in his administrative skills, in providing the schools with dedicated and trained teachers, in his recognition that teaching was a true vocation for the layman in the Church, in the scope of his work, and in his attention to the maladjusted child.

De La Salle did not theorize about education before becoming actually involved in it. His experience, however, has been left to us in his writings: *Exercices de Piété*, *Cantiques Spirituels*, *Les Règles de la Bienséance et de la Civilité chrétienne*, *Les Devoirs d'un Chrétien*, *Conduite des Ecoles chrétiennes*, *Règle commune*, and *Méditations pour le temps de la retraite*. It is from these practical works that a Lasallian philosophy of education can be derived.

De La Salle was continually in dialogue with the experienced teachers with whom he worked. During his lifetime, whatever the Brothers of the Christian Schools accomplished could be attributed to him because he collaborated so closely in all that went on. After his death in 1719, the dynamism of his thought was translated into action by new generations of Brothers and continually adapted in response to new situations.

Until a few years ago, little was known about the origins of the men who joined De La Salle, particularly in the early days. However, more recent studies show that most of these Brothers came from among the poor and from families in the laboring classes or those once known as artisans. But it is also evident from the programs that evolved at Saint Yon that well-educated and professional men soon joined the congregation, very different from those earlier teachers, of whom De La Salle once sadly remarked, reproaching himself, that he had originally regarded them as lower than his own valet (CL 7: 169).

## The Structure of the School

Before considering in detail how the pedagogy of John Baptist de La Salle addressed the needs of the maladjusted child, it would be well to examine the school day he designed, as described in the *Conduite* (CL 24: 263ff).

The students assembled half an hour before class, kept themselves busy

at reading and reviewing their lessons, or prepared their work under the direction of a more advanced classmate. Breakfast and lunch were taken in school to make sure that the students were fed properly and that they learned table manners in a Christian atmosphere.

The school generally included two or three sections of 50 to 60 students, each divided into one or more primary classes, a large class for those learning calligraphy, and sometimes one or more intermediate classes. Within the same class there were separate sections of students in reading, writing, and arithmetic, each section including the slow, the average, and the advanced student. The students were grouped on benches according to subject and progress, and each student moved along the bench and from bench to bench as he progressed in his studies. This can be viewed as an early application of individualized instruction and, perhaps, a form of programmed learning, or, in a current phrase, “micro-teaching.” Each month the teachers and the supervisor tested the students and reorganized the benches and the lessons.

Religion and religious instruction were essentials in De La Salle’s educational philosophy, and religion was the major focus in the school program. The day began and ended with prayer, and prayer began each major segment in the schedule. Religious instruction was formal, detailed, and conducted daily, with added sessions on the eves of feasts. Most of these schools were founded and supported by a parish, into the religious life of which the school was incorporated.

The careful liaison with the parish was especially manifest on Sunday. The students attended morning prayer and the parish Mass, which was followed by an hour and a half of catechism on the principal mysteries of religion. The day ended with vespers and evening prayer. Thursday was a school holiday (CL 24: 107–108).

## **The Elements of Good Schooling**

The elements of good schooling for De La Salle and the Brothers included a program that was integrated, informed, and practical, as well as organized to include student involvement and individualized to meet student needs. The school itself was to possess an environment of orderliness, affection, and calmness.

### **An Integrated Program**

De La Salle anticipated the modern concept of the integrated educational program. A principal goal of the Lasallian school was to teach young

people as thoroughly in the secular subjects as in the religious, and at the same time to prepare them for professional and social life.

This secular-religious integration was to permeate the lives of the teachers as well. To prepare them professionally, De La Salle established normal schools, and to maintain standards he created the position of Inspector (Supervisor) of Schools. De La Salle's conviction that teaching the children of the poor and the working class demanded total dedication also led him to form a congregation of religious Brothers, whose lives would be filled with the spirit of faith and given completely to education. For his Brothers, De La Salle composed many meditations on the need for the integration of faith, zeal, and competence.

### **An Informed Program**

De La Salle insisted that the teachers know the students as thoroughly as possible and be aware of their individual psychological differences.

When each student was enrolled, parents were required to provide the detailed information outlined in the *Register of Admission*, and throughout the school year numerous observations were entered into various records. The *Register of the Change of Lessons* indicated the progress of each student in the different subjects. In the *Register of the Student Leaders*, the student who was at the head of each bench recorded daily attendance. The *Register of the Progress of the Lessons* summarized the number of times each student had been late or absent each month or remiss in his recitation of the catechism. The *Register of the Students' Good and Bad Qualities*, a personal file on each student, was kept by the teacher. In the *Register of the Visitors of Absentees*, students assigned by the teacher reported on their visits to their absent classmates.

### **A Practical Program**

The schools that De La Salle established provided a program that prepared the student for life in the workaday world. The curriculum in the secular subjects, for example, included the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. To facilitate the acquisition of these skills, writing was simplified, and reading was done in the vernacular. In this latter practice De La Salle departed from the standard procedure of the parish school of his day, which, focusing on participation in the Church liturgy and confronted by the problems of French spelling, continued to emphasize Latin rather than the native French in teaching children to read.

Apart from religion, the most important element in De La Salle's educational system was literacy. Over and over he stressed the importance of learning how to read and write. Repeatedly he spoke of illiteracy

as an especially severe educational handicap: even in the seventeenth century, illiteracy was a bar to steady employment.

Therefore, a precise method in teaching reading in the vernacular was developed. Students proceeded from letters to syllables, from syllables to words, from words to phrases and sentences. The reading of both printed and handwritten texts was taught; only after a child had mastered reading was he admitted to the class in writing, where he learned calligraphy.

The writing lesson was eminently practical. The *Conduite* directed that the students be taught to write models of documents that would eventually be useful for them. They learned to write promissory notes, bills and receipts, employee agreements and legal contracts, bonds, deeds, leases for house or land, and assorted writs and records of court proceedings. Thus they were preparing for what they could use after they had left school. When they had practiced this copying sufficiently to have mastered the standard forms, the teachers had them “make up and write such notes, receipts, contracts (and similar documents) for themselves.” The teachers would “also have them write from memory . . . what they have learned in the catechism” (CL 24: 75).

In time some of the Brothers’ schools developed very flexible programs, with an unusual range of subjects, becoming in a sense a prototype of what has since been called the “comprehensive school.” The programs which evolved at Saint Yon illustrate this concept quite clearly.

### **A Program of Student Involvement**

De La Salle was also in favor of participation by the students in the smooth running of the school. He implemented this objective by a system of assignments which involved the students in the management of the school and the class and taught them responsibility. The duties of the “officers of the school”—as they were ordinarily called—were quite varied. There were as many as 15 such officers, each with an assistant. Included were a doorkeeper, a bell ringer, a prayer leader, a section leader, a sweeper, a visitor of the absentees, an inspector (who supervised the students before class), an almoner (who collected the bread and fruit that was left over from the meals to give it to the poor), a server of Mass (who also taught the others how to serve Mass), and a distributor and collector of papers and books.

### **An Individualized Program**

Despite the difficulties that might result from large numbers in the classes, De La Salle insisted that the Brothers pay attention to the individual differences of each of their students. This is particularly emphasized in the

chapter on correction in the *Conduite*. Here De La Salle set forth the various adjustments necessary to deal with delinquent students, students who were badly brought up and headstrong, those who were inclined to be bold and disrespectful, those who were flighty and thoughtless, the stubborn, those brought up gently and timidly, those who had a gentle and shy disposition, the slow, the troublesome, those who were small for their age, the newcomers, the accused, and the accusers. Each type is identified; each type is addressed in a personal way.

### **A Climate of Orderliness, Affection, and Calmness**

De La Salle wanted his Brothers to create in their classes a spirit of quiet, orderliness, and calmness. He warned teachers against unpredictability and talking too much. The latter, he said, “is a major source of trouble in a school.” A sense of serenity would be created by reserve and dignity, not by “having a severe appearance, showing anger, or using harsh words” (CL 24: 19).

What was needed, De La Salle told the Brothers, was a teacher whose demeanor was both firm and gentle, who conveyed a sense of affection for his students. He warned them that the principal cause for absenteeism and truancy was that students have little love for a teacher who does not try to win them over, who does not have a pleasing personality, who puts on a face “like a prison door.”

The best way to keep children in school, even the wayward and mal-adjusted, De La Salle said, was to make them like school, and this could be done only if true affection existed between teacher and students.

Incidentally, he believed that singing could contribute to the serenity of the school—even if only as a variation in a very structured, academic day. Thus, singing was part of the catechism lesson, and De La Salle put together several collections of hymns for that purpose. In some, surprisingly perhaps, the music was that of popular tunes.

Put simply, De La Salle insisted that the teacher love his students and seek to inspire a reciprocal love in them.

We now turn to the matter of special education as the problem was faced in the seventeenth century and addressed by De La Salle and the Brothers at that time.



**PART TWO**

**The Maladjusted Child**

## Source Material

Much of the source material for Part Two is the same as is used in Part One, notably the *Conduite* and De La Salle's *Méditations pour les Dimanches et les principales Fêtes de l'année* (this time, however, the first part of the Meditations, relating to the Sundays of the year). In addition, use is made of a separate collection of meditations composed by De La Salle for the Brothers during the time of their annual retreat and published about 1730. These bear the very lengthy title *Méditations pour le temps de la retraite à l'usage de toutes les personnes qui s'emploient à l'éducation de la jeunesse et particulièrement pour la retraite que font les Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes pendant les vacances* (CL 13).

Part Two also uses as source material the Rule of the Brothers, according to texts found in the manuscripts of 1705, 1715, and 1718, and the principal edition of 1726. There are three parts to this edition of the Rule: *Pratique du Règlement journalier; Règles communes des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes; and Règle du Frère Directeur d'une Maison de l'Institut* (CL 25).

In addition to the above Institute sources, the author cites a modern psychological study by L. Bovet entitled *Les aspects psychiatriques de la délinquance juvénile*, published in Geneva (1951).

Finally, mention should be made of two references to archival collections: the *Règlement de la pension libre de Saint-Yon* from the archives of the Seine-Maritime Department in Rouen (ADSM); and a letter of Brother Polycarp to Abbé Cornet, found in the archives of the Generalate of the Brothers in Rome (AMG).

### 3

## Maladjustment: An Educational Handicap

De La Salle's original purpose was simply to prepare and provide teachers for the parish and the charity schools, but since his ministry was open to all, he and the Brothers had in their classes children who were disturbed and troubled, children who needed special attention and care if the school was to benefit them.

Most of these children came from among the poor and those who worked at manual tasks for a living, and De La Salle soon saw in some of them the consequences of their deprived life: sterile affections, stunted intellect, physical neglect, and a lack of moral values. He quickly realized, however, that such troubled children were found not only among the poor.

It was in response to the personally debilitating consequences of social and family deprivation and frustration that De La Salle first addressed the special educational needs of the maladjusted child.

Modern educational psychology uses a variety of terms to identify and categorize learning disabilities in children, particularly those children whose ability to learn is affected by maladjustment. One such outline, for example, might enumerate physical, intellectual, mental, and behavioral disorders. More recent concerns for moral development and character training have in an oblique way raised questions of right and wrong, and good and evil. What has euphemistically been called "moral dysfunctioning" is sometimes viewed as a problem in family living.

De La Salle did not develop a systematic treatise on maladjusted children. Instead, as his experience and that of the Brothers brought him into contact with children having educational or emotional needs, he concentrated on working out pedagogical solutions in terms of specific classroom procedures. His method was to create an educational environment which responded to the economic, social, and moral conditions he and the Brothers found among the working class and the poor.

De La Salle's writings show that he was concerned with maladjusted youth mainly in the sense of children *emotionally* handicapped because of disturbing moral disorders arising out of or associated with poverty. In the particular instance of Saint Yon, De La Salle's Brothers, however reluctantly, extended their service to the mentally ill and to persons from higher social levels than the poor.

Most of De La Salle's treatment for maladjusted children is described in the chapters of the *Conduite* dealing with methodology and discipline. Here we do not find organized groupings but rather lists identifying a variety of social, intellectual, and moral symptoms and phenomena, each with a description or comment (CL 24: 159–166).\*

While the *Conduite* does not organize student maladjustments into discrete categories, the remedies proposed by De La Salle do fall into categories which approach modern concepts of treatment, and it is with this in mind that the groupings in the pages which follow have been determined. The remedies proposed by De La Salle are seen as particularly relevant to the needs that the early Brothers observed among their pupils. Such a perspective is especially helpful in the examination of the work at Saint Yon. The system of education devised there was based entirely on the ideas of discipline, conduct, and pedagogy presented in the writings of De La Salle, and it was this Lasallian program which helped create the special remedial education eventually found in schools throughout France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

### **Environmental Factors Contributing to Maladjustment in Children**

De La Salle's description of the maladjusted child and the resulting deficiencies is today rather commonplace and not particularly striking. But when we take time to examine and reflect on his discussion of the causes and particularly the remedies he proposed, we recognize the breadth of his educational vision and the compassion which characterized his entire attitude toward suffering families and their children. He recognized in these children and their families the debilitating impact of the society in which they lived whatever the level.

Among the causes of the difficulties of children De La Salle clearly identified parental neglect and ignorance, preoccupation with earning a living, and a lack of religious faith in families. But instead of blaming families, De La Salle proposed clear, direct, faith-filled corrective methods

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\* De La Salle identifies and addresses many forms of handicaps but not physical handicaps. This would seem to be a rather surprising omission when one considers the attention which the physically handicapped need and receive today. But to analyze the situation and propose a hypothesis to explain this omission is far beyond the scope of the present work. BFH

that were both respectful of persons and rooted in sound psychological practices that anticipated much of what is regarded as standard today. De La Salle's procedure was to analyze the difficulty suffered by the child, offer a solution, and create the environment in which change could be effected. The institutional environment for that change was the well-conducted school.

The environmental factors contributing to maladjustment in children which De La Salle identified may be subsumed under three general headings: disturbed emotional relationships in families, lack of a role model and of a value system, and parental neglect.

### **Disturbed Emotional Relationships in Families**

De La Salle identified two types of emotional disorders. The first arises when a child has been left on his own from his early years. The second develops in the child of permissive parents who in practice "worship their children" (CL 24: 187). As a matter of fact, De La Salle considered that these two forms of affective disorder are in one way or another responsible for all deficiencies, faults, or delinquencies in children. "All disorders in children, especially among the working class and the poor, usually come from their having been left to themselves and badly brought up from their early years" (CL 25: 17).

When one speaks of defective parental affection, whether deficient or misdirected, it is usual to distinguish between the maternal and the paternal. De La Salle saw that a mother might cling to her child in a protective way, while the father might not provide the suitable balance achieved by exercising in a loving manner the authority expected of him. The teacher had somehow to remedy this imbalance; the Brother's influence had to make up for what the father failed to provide. It was important, De La Salle insisted, that the Brother's authority be patient, fair, moderate, and inspired by love for each of the children, the Brother acting as a true substitute for a father, what modern psychology calls the *Vaterersatz* ("father substitute").

### **Lack of a Role Model and of a Value System**

Adjustment problems for children result not only from disturbed family relations. A role model, a mature person to admire and identify with, may be lacking in a child's family. De La Salle made numerous references to the absence of such models in the families of the children who attended the schools of the Brothers and to a family's lack of religious practice and religious training:

One of the main duties of fathers and mothers is to bring up their children in a Christian manner and to teach them their religion. But most parents are not sufficiently enlightened in these matters, or are too taken up with their temporal affairs. (CL 24: 186)

Furthermore, De La Salle knew that bad example abounded outside the family, and he warned that association with bad companions “teaches children to commit many sins” (CL 13: 11–12).

De La Salle noted that few children “go astray from malice of heart,” but many more do so from the bad example of companions they meet while wandering the streets. This problem seemed to haunt him, for he returned to it again and again. He reminded the Brothers to be vigilant so that their students “avoid all bad company.” He even warned them that they ought to consider themselves “false prophets” if they did not take the trouble to find out if their students were with bad companions, passing most of their time in misconduct and licentious behavior (CL 13: 11–12).

## Parental Neglect

De La Salle identified two types of neglect, moral and physical, and saw that many of the children in the Brothers’ classes suffered from one or both:

You ought to look on the children whom you are charged to teach as poor and abandoned orphans. Though most do have a father here on earth, they exist, nonetheless, as if they had none and are abandoned to themselves regarding the salvation of their souls. (CL 12: 116)

De La Salle found one cause of this neglect in the economic situation, the poverty in which families lived, with its uncertainty, its demoralizing effect upon family life, and its curtailing of even the most elementary education as well as opportunities for culture (CL 25: 17).

De La Salle also realized that the children simply might not be properly motivated by their parents, since working class and poor parents themselves “had ordinarily little education” (CL 25: 17). A common result of the lack of education in many parents was a lack of interest in refinement of any kind, and a disregard for anything which did not immediately seem useful in easing the situation in which they lived; school was ignored. The ultimate consequences for children were often illiteracy, frustration, and idleness.

The Brothers inevitably had in their classes a certain percentage of dull or slow students. De La Salle noted in the *Conduite* that parents of these children particularly, not seeing any value in education, frequently failed to send their children to school, or made little or no effort to make

them apply themselves. He wrote that they “do not hesitate to take their children out of school prematurely in order to put them to work to help the family” (CL 24: 187).

In this parental lack of interest De La Salle recognized how unaware parents were of the means of advancement which an education could procure for their children. He required the Brothers to correct this attitude by making the parents “understand the obligations they had of having their children educated and the wrong they do in not having them learn to read and write” (CL 24: 187).

De La Salle was also concerned to remedy the indifference to cultural values, including the rules of civility and propriety, that children acquired at home. He was determined to make children recognize by the example and the quality of the teachers that these values were not negligible but constituted a considerable advantage. He did not consider it enough that the children gain religious and secular information; it was also important to De La Salle that the students model their lives on those of their teachers.

Physical condition and poor health were other indications to De La Salle of parental neglect. He insisted that children be properly clothed when they came to school. That students were obliged to bring their breakfast and lunch to school suggests that De La Salle recognized a lack of hygiene, of good diet, and of good upbringing in some families. The *Conduite* prescribed that when a student was admitted the parents were required to have him properly clothed and that they were not to send him to school unless he was “wearing proper and clean clothes,” with his hair “well combed and free of lice.” If parents did not cooperate in these matters, however, De La Salle recommended that rather than keeping those children out of school they be seated in such a way “that those whose parents are negligent and those children who have lice be separated from those who are clean and who do not have them” (CL 24: 259).

Malnutrition and the lack of hygiene were the causes of several illnesses. De La Salle makes reference in particular to scrofula and ringworm. For hygienic reasons, he prescribed that no student was to be received into the school who had any infectious disease, among which he included epilepsy, then regarded as contagious.

If it happened that any student contracted one of these illnesses, “He must be seen by the house doctor. If the problem is so diagnosed, he will be suspended from school until he is cured, assuming the illness is curable” (CL 24: 269).

The preceding brief summary indicates that De La Salle had quite a good appreciation of the origins of some of the social and educational maladjustments in children and of appropriate remedies as well.

The overall remedy envisioned by De La Salle to assist these maladjusted children was to counter adverse environmental conditions through the Christian school and the person of the Brother, who would identify

with the poor, and “by the grace of God” serve as a model for them and help the family (CL 12: 236).

In his meditation for Christmas, De La Salle wrote, “The poor will send their children to you to be educated only insofar as you will love poverty; otherwise, you will be neither loved nor appreciated by them.” Elsewhere, he said, “Those who come to your school are convinced that you have received the grace to support the weak, to teach the ignorant, to correct the delinquent” (CL 12: 236).

### Other Factors Contributing to Maladjustment

Even a cursory reading of the sources will show that as he immersed himself in the work of the schools and the life of the working class, De La Salle grew increasingly sensitive to the disturbed and troubled child, and that he analyzed carefully the cases which came to his attention in terms which often anticipated modern insights and categories.

Though specific categories of troubled children identified by De La Salle appear for the most part only in random listings in his writings, they can for our purpose here be grouped into three general types. In effect, De La Salle believed that weakness of character, inappropriate behavior, and low intelligence contributed to maladjustment.

Without doubt any child, at least for brief periods, can display maladjustment in one or all of these areas without being considered unusual. It is only when the difficulties have become habitual and are present in combination that the child can be considered abnormal or antisocial. It is such cases that De La Salle addressed when he wrote:

These unfortunate children, accustomed to an idle life for many years, have great difficulty when it comes time for them to seek work. In addition, through association with bad companions, they learn to commit many sins which later on are very difficult to stop, the bad habits having been contracted over so long a period of time. . . .

If left to their own willfulness, they run the risk of ruining themselves and causing much sorrow to their parents. Faults committed will become habits and very difficult to correct. The good and bad habits contracted in childhood and maintained over a period of time ordinarily become second nature. (CL 13: 11-12)

It is almost impossible to repair at a more advanced age . . . [these] disorders, especially among the working class and the poor . . . because the bad habits they have acquired are overcome only with great difficulty, and scarcely ever entirely, no matter what care may be taken to eliminate them. (CL 25: 17)

In these and similar passages, De La Salle described maladjustments in children, the way these maladjustments influenced development, and their enduring consequences.

### Weakness of Character

De La Salle was a realist, and though he did not believe that there were many corrupted or immoral children in the schools of the Brothers, he recognized that there would be some. “There are children,” he wrote, “who go astray through malice of heart.” Others, he said, “have a bad attitude which leads them eventually into malice,” while some “have evil inclinations, what might be called defects of the heart” (CL 24: 161).

The moral or character deficiencies De La Salle identified can be placed under five headings, though these categories are not always readily distinguishable from one another in his writings (CL 24: 160–167).

Some children are *irresponsible*. De La Salle considered that this condition begins with childish misbehavior but grows into a more serious instability which discourages a child from whatever demands serious attention; it can lead to truancy. Another manifestation of this weakness of character is that displayed by the *headstrong* child. Going beyond mere persistent misbehavior, these children “do only what they want from morning to night, determined to have their own will, and have no respect for parents or religion” (CL 24: 166).

Uncorrected, irresponsible and headstrong children could become *incorrigible*. Such children, De La Salle wrote, “though corrected a great number of times, simply refuse to reform their conduct.” This maladjustment could lead to *irreligion*, and these irreligious children soon neglect “all prayer and the sacraments, are disrespectful in church and prefer bad company, which surely leads them into habitual sin.” Children with such character disorders De La Salle identified as *licentious*; their serious moral failings include lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, and fighting.

### Inappropriate Behavior

Behavioral maladjustments, as De La Salle described them, arose from home training or poor classroom practice by a teacher. They developed into educational problems through accumulation or persistency.

The most familiar of these is perhaps *flightiness*, arising not from malice, but from thoughtlessness. Such children, said De La Salle, “ordinarily do not reflect, and lack all control.” Shortly after being corrected, they will repeat the mistake, or make a similar one, meriting the same punishment. *Flightiness* is sometimes a cause of truancy. A more serious problem is the *spoiled* child. De La Salle felt that parents were often too

willing to yield to the whims and demands of their children and seemed afraid to trouble the child or were reluctant to trouble themselves. Some parents, he once remarked, even worshiped their children.

Another serious behavioral problem is *stubbornness*. “One child,” De La Salle wrote, “resists the teacher who seeks to correct him,” “another complains,” “another grumbles or cries.” Another kind of maladjusted behavior to which De La Salle often alluded is *boldness*, or *lack of respect*. Although he did not clarify these particular terms except indirectly when writing on the subject of punishment, he seems to have meant children who were insolent in almost every situation, and determined to resist any authority (CL 24: 163).

### Low Intelligence .

De La Salle’s comments and ideas on intelligence must be interpreted with great care. While manifestations of weakness of character and inappropriate behavior are familiar enough in our own day, our concept of intelligence is very much affected by modern ideas of academic and “intelligence” testing. Nonetheless, what De La Salle observed here will have relevance when his solutions for the slow or maladjusted learner are examined, though his language lacks modern psychological nuance.

Speaking of students who are limited intellectually, De La Salle uses French words such as *ignorants*, *stupides*, *hébétés*, in referring to children who have a “dull mind” or who are “slow.”

From the end of the sixteenth century, the French word *stupid* meant someone who was “dull-minded,” who lacked intelligence. The word *hébété* is very close to the word *bête* [*beast*]. Children referred to by De La Salle as “*stupides*” and “*hébétés*” are those who have a very low intelligence quotient.

Here are some of the characteristics of such children according to De La Salle:

These students usually do not follow the lesson well, do not read well, do not remember well, learn little or nothing. (CL 24: 166)

Some children are so dull [*pesant*] that they cannot repeat very well an answer that several others have recited one after the other. (CL 24: 97)

There are some who are slow [*tardif*] and who cannot follow a [thought]. (CL 24: 117)

In numerous passages of the *Conduite*, De La Salle alluded to the difficulties some students have in memorizing or even paying regular attention to the lesson. Some “follow the first idea that comes to their mind or imagination,” and there are others “for whom learning does not come

easy, who do not memorize well, or cannot retain for long what they have finally learned” (CL 24: 167).

De La Salle also recognized a specific reading problem, which today we call dyslexia, when he noted that some children were “liable to reverse letters, saying for example OM for MO” (CL 24: 117).

De La Salle made no reference in these early documents to the mentally ill. However, at Saint Yon and similar institutions the Brothers did eventually make provision for these damaged, abused, and neglected people.

## 4

# Helping the Maladjusted Child: The Effective School

The common, tuition-free parish school, in which for the most part De La Salle and the early Brothers worked, soon developed an environment, a taken-for-granted, orderly way of operating, within which maladjusted, disturbed children found security and help. From his writings we can easily infer the characteristics which De La Salle believed such a school should possess if it is to be effective. These characteristics, brought to fruition by dedicated teachers, virtually of themselves provided the special environment from which educationally handicapped children benefited.

It is in various parts of the *Conduite* and the *Méditations*, particularly the meditations for the time of retreat, that De La Salle identifies three characteristics of the effective school. First, the school must be well-organized. Second, it must be staffed by competent and dedicated teachers. Third, it must maintain a well-defined and appropriate discipline. We shall examine each in turn, with our principal focus on their function in special education for the maladjusted child.

### The Effective School Is Well-organized

The effective school for De La Salle was first of all firmly grounded in the traditional teachings, liturgy, prayer practice, and parish life of the Catholic Church. While De La Salle's emphasis on fidelity to Rome may at times seem overly restrictive, it must be borne in mind that the seventeenth century was the time of Jansenism, and it was important for the Brothers to be very careful that the religious education they imparted carried no suspicious elements.

As we have seen, the well-organized school as De La Salle perceived it included a program which was integrated, informed, practical, and orderly, and which provided for student participation. The particular emphasis which De La Salle placed on assisting the students individually is reflected in the thorough admissions and promotion procedures the Brothers used. These procedures contributed significantly to the proper organization of the school.

The teacher responsible for the admission of the new student was required to enter detailed information about the family in the *Register of*

*Admission.* Information was also recorded on the habits or qualities of the child. This practice assisted the Director in properly placing new students in classes. Improper placement in a class, De La Salle said, “could place the child in a position of being unable to learn and in danger of being ignorant the rest of his life.” He also warned about keeping a child too long in the same level, “a situation distasteful to the teacher, the child, and his parents” (CL 24: 106–130 *passim*).

This initial admissions information was supplemented by observations made by the teacher himself. He kept a file called *Register of the Good and Bad Qualities of the Students*. Another file was kept for strictly scholastic evaluations. At the end of each school year, the teacher assembled all these entries in a report on each of his students. He submitted this to the Director of the school, who in turn passed it on to the new teacher of the student if there were to be a change of class. In this way the teacher would “come to know his students and the way he ought to act toward them” (CL 24: 236).

In order to have a personal understanding of the character of each student, the Director of the school kept all these reports and compared carefully “those of past years with those of the following years, and those of one teacher with those of another of the same class with the same students,” to determine their degree of similarity and difference (CL 24: 238). It was this personal knowledge of each student rather than mere grades that was the basis for a student’s advancement through the school’s program.

De La Salle knew that it was important to have the family accept the organization of the school and to collaborate in the task of educating the children. To accomplish this goal, he made the admission of the student contingent on his family’s support of the educational philosophy of the school, and he urged the teachers to try to change the cultural resistance of some parents to the whole process of education (CL 24: 183–184). He suggested that the teachers speak with parents who neglected to send their children to school, because he wanted parents to understand their duty toward their children and to realize the harm absenteeism did. For the remiss parent De La Salle proposed a rather drastic remedy. “Since these poor parents are generally those on alms, it is necessary to involve the parish priest . . . so as not to provide any alms until they send their children to school” (CL 24: 187).

He required parents to have their children take breakfast and lunch in school so that the children could learn how to eat politely and “in a Christian atmosphere, and to be sure the children were fed properly.” Parents were to be sure that their child was diligent at schoolwork, that he not gossip about anything that took place in school, that he not associate with reckless companions, that he come to school properly

dressed, that his hair be well combed and “free of lice,” and that he not sleep with his parents. De La Salle also advised parents not to listen to the complaints of their child against the teacher, but rather to speak with the teacher when their child was not present. These warnings suggest situations De La Salle felt were at the root of many serious maladjustments (CL 24: 167–169).

Collaboration between parents and school was also demanded when it was a matter of punishing students. De La Salle recommended that teachers themselves not punish students who had been absent without permission, but require that the parents punish them at home before returning them to school. For the punishment of some children, De La Salle recommended that the teacher meet with the parents to decide upon the best approach (CL 24: 190).

De La Salle reminded teachers that they too had the grave responsibility of making school attractive. He pointed out that if the children were learning and liked their classes, they themselves would put pressure on their parents to keep them in school. This would often be successful, he said, because “parents desire only what their children desire, so it will be enough that the children desire to come to school for their parents to be satisfied to send them there” (CL 24: 187).

This atmosphere of faith, this structured yet personal program, this attention to detail, this effort however primitive to understand child and family and to have parents collaborate with the school, this combination of affirmation and affection—all these helped to create the environment within which the maladjusted child could find stability, direction, and purpose, and where he could learn to make some progress in controlling himself and managing his life.

### **The Effective School Is Staffed by Competent and Dedicated Teachers**

The *Conduite* is a compendium of the best which De La Salle could find in existing works on pedagogy, an eclectic work refined by his own insights and the experience of the Brothers themselves. The *Conduite* constituted the basic instrument for the preparation of the Brothers. Along with this detailed text went careful supervision of the new teacher and, eventually, a normal school or teacher-training institution. These elements, innovative in the synthesis De La Salle made of them, demonstrated his determination that the teacher be prepared for his arduous and responsible work.

But De La Salle was concerned not only that the teachers have an



The school in Dijon, opened by De La Salle in 1705, was transferred to this site prior to 1714.

adequate technical or professional preparation, he also wanted teachers to be exemplary persons. The religious lifestyle which the Brothers embraced, together with the spiritual principles of the meditations De La Salle wrote and the retreats he scheduled, helped achieve this goal (CL 24: 45–90 passim; CL 13: 30–67; CL 12: 45–71).

De La Salle was not satisfied simply to prepare the Brothers for the practical work of the classroom, nor did he limit himself to urging the Brothers to have a good understanding of their students. He wanted the Brothers to love their students, for he was aware of the educational power of affection, particularly for the troubled child. He also wanted the teacher to win the reciprocal love of his students. In one of his meditations he asks, “Do you take advantage of the love students have for you, to lead them to God?” He even wanted the teacher “to make [the students] love the school” (CL 12: 45).

Finally, De La Salle insisted on the importance of the teacher’s good example. According to him, this example makes a much greater impression on the minds and hearts of children than do words, because children are not yet sufficiently “capable of reflection” and “ordinarily model themselves on what they see.” He went on to say that children are drawn to do “what they see done, more than by what they hear said.” Indeed, it was the example of the teacher which, he believed, would most help the maladjusted child (CL 13: 52).

The teacher’s relation to his students, his love for even the most troubled, and his vision of his life as a vocation in the Church were very often the subjects of those meditations De La Salle wrote for the Brothers for their daily prayer, for retreats, and for certain church feasts:

[The Brothers] will love all their students tenderly.

You must look upon the obligation you have of winning their hearts as one of the principal means of engaging them to live as Christians.

Let your zeal give concrete evidence in your actions that you love those whom God has entrusted to you.

It is necessary to show affection for [the students]. (CL 12 and 13)

At the same time De La Salle recognized that the teacher must exercise an appropriate firmness. He wished the teacher to couple the tenderness of a mother with the firmness of a father.

If you have the firmness of a father toward them, in order to pull them away from disorder and keep them from it, you must also have the tenderness of a mother for them, in order to protect them and do all the good for them that is dependent on you. (CL 13: 19)

Knowledge of the character of each student, De La Salle believed, allowed the teacher to individualize his guidance and balance tenderness with firmness.

It is necessary to have more gentleness for some, more firmness toward others. Some require much patience, others need to be prodded and encouraged. Some need to be reproved, punished, and corrected for their faults; others need to be supervised continually to prevent them from hurting themselves or wandering away. (CL 12: 104)

But De La Salle knew that preparation, conviction, and affection on the part of the teachers were not enough to make the school effective. The Brothers themselves had to be effective in the realities of the classroom. This was particularly important with the maladjusted child, for whom all too often learning difficulties were the root of his maladjustment.

De La Salle showed much affection for students with limited ability, and it can be said that he treated these students with extreme sensitivity. His concern can best be understood in terms of the profound faith he had in his own vocation as an educator of those deprived of even common resources. Better than any commentary, his own words bear witness to this fact.

The Directors of each house or the Inspectors of Schools must keep a very exact vigilance over all their teachers . . . and make sure that they carefully apply themselves to teach their students, that they neglect none of them, and that their concern be equal toward all, even greater toward the slowest and the most negligent. (CL 24: 188)

De La Salle gave many pedagogical and practical guidelines to his teachers for dealing with the slow student:

If it happens that a student is so slow that he cannot even repeat an answer that several others have recited one after another, the teacher will help him remember by having the answer repeated four or five times alternatively by a student who knows it well and then by the one who does not know it, in order to make it very easy for him to learn it.

The teacher will use simple expressions and words easy to understand in his questions . . . and he will make the questions and the answers as short as possible. (CL 24: 116ff.)

He urges the teacher to show a practical concern for the slow learner or the child frightened by schooling or ill-adjusted to it. Take things slowly, he recommended. "Help the children to read exactly, not skipping syllables." Slower students should be questioned often, helped by

repetition, whether by themselves or by others, but not required to do what they obviously cannot.

The teacher will not allow anyone to laugh at a student who does not give a good answer, nor allow any prompting. (CL 24: 101)

It is . . . your duty . . . to motivate those who lack courage. . . and to support the weak. . . . You will have to give an account to God . . . if you have neglected those who are most ignorant. (CL 13: 30-31)

Many maladjusted students, of course, found it difficult to maintain attention and to concentrate in the Brothers' classes. In the *Conduite De La Salle* alluded to this problem.

Teachers will help students to be completely attentive, which is not naturally easy for children. Ordinarily their attention is of very short duration. (CL 24: 22)

The teacher will keep a very attentive eye on those who do not like to follow the lesson and those who most easily excuse themselves from paying attention. (CL 24: 23)

In order to keep students, especially slow students, attentive and prevent them from becoming bored, De La Salle offered several specific suggestions. The teacher should:

- ♦ avoid talking too much;
- ♦ avoid speaking in a boring manner and in a way that is uninteresting;
- ♦ frequently ask questions, especially of those who are slow;
- ♦ make the questions short and use a simple vocabulary;
- ♦ avoid belittling and embarrassing students, either by word or in some other way when they cannot answer well;
- ♦ involve the students and help them to say what they have difficulty remembering;
- ♦ give rewards to the slowest when they have tried their best to learn;
- ♦ sometimes question a student unexpectedly to see if he is attentive;
- ♦ from time to time, ask those students to read who do not like to follow the reading, but have them read only a little each time. (CL 24: 22-23, 97-100)

De La Salle noted that the teachers "will use those other similar ways which prudence and charity will help them discover, in order to have the students learn more quickly and to remember with greater ease" (CL 24: 100).

De La Salle was not satisfied with having a good relationship established between teacher and student. Aware of the detrimental effect of the lack of a good role model, De La Salle also was aware of the rehabilitative effect students could have on one another. The quality of

interaction among students in matters of learning and discipline was important, and De La Salle wanted to take every opportunity to foster it. Even classroom seating became significant in this regard.

The *Conduite* lists some interesting ways of grouping students. De La Salle recommended that students be seated according to a strategic plan, so that “a thoughtless and flighty student is placed between two sensible and self-controlled students; a reckless student, alone or between two who are of stable character; a talkative student between two who are quiet and very attentive,” and so on. A student was even to be assigned the task of taking from his classmates objects that might disturb the lesson (CL 24: 119–121 *passim*).

In the seating arrangement the teacher was also to take scholastic factors into account. He was to seat a student who was beginning in the writing section next to one who was perfecting his skill in writing, or one who was in the next upper section; a student who was having difficulty making a stroke, next to one who made the stroke with ease; a student who had a problem holding his body or his pen, next to one who did both well; and so with the rest, so that they would be able to learn from others.

When a new student came to a class in reading, the teacher was to assign him for several days, as he judged necessary, “to a companion who will teach him how to follow in his book while others are reading” (CL 24: 262).

It has been noted already that when a student was admitted to the school, De La Salle required the parents to ensure that he associate with good companions. The Brothers’ desire that the students not be subjected to bad example was doubtless the motive for the practice of assigning to each student a classmate as a companion to and from school (CL 24: 121).

To develop accountability and mutual support among the students, De La Salle also established the office of “visitor of those absent.” In each class, two or three students were made responsible for checking up on the absent classmates who lived in their respective neighborhoods. These visitors of the absent were chosen from those “most attached to and most diligent at school” (CL 24: 32).

The visitors had to have intelligence, be of upright conduct, and be judged capable of resisting corruption. They also had to give evidence of a great respect for the teacher and an “entire obedience and docility of spirit.” They visited the parents of the absentee in order to learn the cause of his absence and then reported to their teacher on the situation. When absentees were sick, the visitors saw them from time to time “to give them comfort and to encourage them to suffer their sickness with patience for the love of God.” They then kept their teacher informed of the progress of their classmates’ health (CL 24: 245–246).

## The Effective School Maintains a Well-defined and Appropriate Discipline

For De La Salle the effective school was itself a discipline, in the very best sense of the word. Its purposeful, individualized program, its attention to detail, its competent and dedicated teachers all provided the direction, order, sense of value and achievement which children need, the environment which is particularly important in the special education required by maladjusted children (CL 13: 104–105; CL 24: 138–140).

But De La Salle and the Brothers were well aware that there were times and circumstances in which a more specific and active disciplinary approach was required. Discipline in the sense of correction and punishment was also needed.

Because of the harsh way in which discipline was administered in the schools of seventeenth-century France and particularly the severity with which maladjusted children were treated, De La Salle's provisions for discipline deserve our special attention. It must be conceded that by current norms some of what the *Conduite* prescribes for dealing with troubled children seems rigid and even severe, but the *Conduite* qualifies this severity with precise limits, with positive action, and with love and affection for the disturbed (CL 24: 151–153).

Drawing upon the *Méditations* and the *Conduite*, we see that for De La Salle what we might call discipline per se consisted primarily and fundamentally of vigilance on the part of the teacher, but it also included correction and punishment administered for various kinds of inappropriate behavior, and expulsion in extreme cases.

### Vigilance

Vigilance, De La Salle believed, was essential for the good teacher. Discipline was to be rooted in the teacher's vigilance, that is, in the total presence of the teacher as a person whose authority was established by competence and dedication, who was prepared to anticipate and forestall disruption in the class, and who acted as a model of firmness and consistency (CL 13: 13).

The vigilant teacher, De La Salle said, "will watch over his students, will observe them to learn their characters and dispositions." He urged the teacher to cultivate the affection of his pupils, supplementing the firm affection of the father without becoming, however, a competitor in the family's responsibilities. Vigilance, De La Salle believed, would be the major influence in properly disciplining the maladjusted child (CL 13: 48–52; CL 24: 19).

De La Salle saw bad companions, whether in school or out, as the great cause of the destruction of youth, often leading them into serious misconduct, from which, he said, it could be almost impossible to free them. The good teacher will promote good discipline by exercising vigilance over the companionships and friendships developed among his pupils, even to the point, as we have seen, of assigning students to travel together to and from school (CL 13: 11–12; CL 24: 121–122).

Because the presence of the vigilant teacher reduced the likelihood of disturbances, it also reduced the frequency of corrections and punishment. This itself contributed to discipline. “Frequent correction,” De La Salle said, “is a great disorder in the school, . . . and to reduce the need for [correction] is one of the best ways to maintain good order” (CL 24: 149).

## **Correction and Punishment**

As used in the *Conduite*, the word *correction* includes various forms of punishment from reprimands and simple written assignments (sometimes called “penances”) to corporal punishment. Whatever the form of punishment or correction, it was always to be administered within carefully defined limits, and the teacher administering it had to take care to control his attitude and personal reaction (CL 13: 53–63).

To achieve its purpose, all correction was to conform to a number of conditions. De La Salle reminded the teacher that he must at all costs avoid demeaning the student, for this embittered him and provoked a dislike for school. He pointed out that a child’s feelings of revenge and ill-will following a punishment administered in anger sometimes continued a long time and aggravated an already disturbed student. In such circumstances the correction did not accomplish its immediate purpose, which was the improvement of the student, nor the long-range purpose, which was to awaken in him the desire to resemble his teacher. This was why De La Salle prescribed moderation in punishment. Proper motivation when administering punishment, he said in one of the meditations, is “one of the best means of touching and winning the hearts of those who have committed some fault and of helping them to improve themselves” (CL 12: 115).

In some instances, De La Salle recommended reproofing students privately rather than in class. In all cases, he wished that the correction be individualized, that is, be appropriate to the personality of the student in view of the offense (CL 24: 157–160).

Corporal punishment was an accepted school practice in the seventeenth century and led to great abuse. De La Salle accepted the reality,

but moderated its use with very precise conditions to prevent the teacher from acting in anger or physically abusing the student (CL 24: 153–154).\*

From these general principles, we can infer that the specific directives De La Salle proposed for administering correction included that it be beneficial, just, proportionate, and timely (CL 24: 151–153).

When correction was needed, De La Salle prescribed that it was first necessary for the teacher to determine that it would be beneficial, that is “useful and helpful . . . either for the student who is to be corrected, or for the others who witness it.” It was important for the teacher to examine himself to see that he was not correcting the student out of a feeling of dislike for the child or because he had been annoyed by him or by his parents.

The teacher had also to determine whether the correction was just and proportionate to the fault, whether the student was really disposed to receive it, and whether he recognized the fault for which he was being corrected. If such was not the case, the punishment had to be postponed. Punishment was to be administered with dignity, without “striking the student, pulling his ears or hair, or using insulting words.”

If despite all these precautions, the student became angry over the correction or seemed otherwise unlikely to profit by it or understand the reason for it, the teacher was to wait until he judged that he could “gently help [the student] get control of himself and admit his mistake.” In short, correction was to be timely (CL 13: 60).

Rather than punishments, De La Salle was in favor of using for correction written assignments he called “penances,” for he saw that these were less disagreeable to the students, lent themselves to more flexible

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\*De La Salle uses the word *correction* to include five kinds of punishment: reprimands, penances, use of a strap (*férule*), use of a rod, and expulsion from the school. “As one of the principal rules of the Brothers is to speak rarely in the schools, the use of reprimands ought to be very rare.” Penances included the following: standing or kneeling for a period of time, as much as half an hour; memorizing a part of a lesson; reading aloud; writing a page or two at home; and being among the first to arrive at school for a week (a penance for coming late). The use of the strap and the rod was very strictly legislated (CL 24: 146 and 148). For example, the strap, which was padded leather 10 to 12 inches long and two inches wide, was to be administered on the palm of the left hand and with no more than two strokes. The rod, for more serious delinquencies, was limited to three strokes on the student’s buttocks. Many other details governing the use of these instruments were given. These restrictions concern the importance of good judgment, self-control, and moderation on the part of the teacher, and humble submission and acceptance on the part of the student. The authority to expel a student from the school was reserved to the Director, and it was stipulated that it should be an “extraordinary occurrence.” BAL

timing, and caused fewer complaints from the parents. Thus, they were more likely to be beneficial.

The teachers will make use of penances to keep the students humble and to put them in a disposition of heart to correct themselves of their faults. These penances will be remedial and proportioned to the faults that the students have committed, so that the students can be helped to make satisfaction before God, and there will even be a preventive remedy to keep them from falling in the future. (CL 24: 174–179)

Since De La Salle saw frequent punishment as a very great disorder in a school, he urged that the teacher act with skill and diligence to maintain the students in good order “almost without using any corrections at all.” He added, “It is silence, vigilance, and the self-control of the teacher that establish good order in a school, not severity or beatings” (CL 24: 151–152).

Though De La Salle stressed the remedial and preventive, as well as the restorative and formative roles of correction, he did not ignore the positive effect of rewards. He recommended that the teacher from time to time give rewards to those who are most faithful in their school duties, in order to encourage them to maintain their enthusiasm and to stimulate others to act in similar ways (CL 24: 138–141).

Certain maladjusted students did not benefit from the orderly environment of the school or were unresponsive to the usual motivations, such as job assignments and rewards. These students needed special attention, and De La Salle addressed that need in several ways, with specific directions for incentives, action, and punishment, as the following passages show (CL 24: 157–167).

It is necessary to punish students for . . . all lies, even the smallest; the students must know . . . that sometimes they will be pardoned when they honestly admit their guilt; they will be encouraged to ask pardon humbly for their faults . . . and will even be urged to impose a penance on themselves.

De La Salle proposed to correct in the same way “all those who have been fighting” and those who “have robbed someone or stolen something.” If children have a naturally bold and arrogant spirit, they must be won over but also corrected for their bad attitude.

If they have a bold and arrogant spirit, it is necessary to give them some assignment in school, such as inspector, if they are judged capable, or collector of papers; or to promote them in some subjects as in writing, arithmetic, and so forth, in order to give them a liking for the school. It is necessary, also, to correct them and

maintain control of them, not letting them do whatever they want to do. If these students are young, fewer steps need to be taken.

It is necessary to speak little to disrespectful children . . . and always seriously when they have committed some fault. It is necessary to keep them humble, to correct them, when the correction is able to be helpful to them. . . . It will be good sometimes to warn them and reprove them gently and specifically for their faults.

Since the faults of the thoughtless and flighty were considered to be the result of a lack of reflection, De La Salle proposed that the teacher take steps to prevent their faults by assigning these students to seats between thoughtful students and near the teacher. He also wanted them to be shown affection and from time to time be given some reward, “in order to encourage them to be diligent and have a liking for school,” because, as he said, they are the ones who are most inclined to be truant. And while they are present, De La Salle continued, “these children will be helped if involved in ways that will keep them busy, so that they will be calm and silent.”

It is necessary to correct the stubborn for their stubbornness, especially those who are stubborn when they are being corrected. . . . It will be necessary, however, that the teachers act in such a way as to prevent the student who is corrected from grumbling, murmuring, crying, or disrupting the school in some other way, which often happens when the child is small or because he does not understand. . . . It will ordinarily be better not to correct this type of student at all and to pretend not to notice when he is not studying or when he does neglect his duty in some other way.

It is generally better not to correct spoiled children, but to prevent their faults in other ways: . . . by giving them only those penances easy to do, or by managing the situation to forestall their mistakes by pretending not to see them, or by warning them gently in private. . . . (CL 24: 183–184)

De La Salle placed great emphasis upon school attendance and urged that everything be done to determine the causes of absences so as to prevent them. Children who are truant, he felt, “are usually already inclined to evil, and bad behavior follows waywardness.” De La Salle believed that interesting the child in school was the best remedy for absences, and even proposed rewarding with responsibilities those inclined to truancy, in the hope of giving them a liking for school and perhaps making them a source of good example.

The teacher will take care from time to time to stimulate [those inclined to be truant], encouraging them with rewards, and making them

diligent in school by some assignment of work that occupies them and engages them, according to their ability. It is especially necessary never to threaten them with correction.

It is necessary . . . to have firmness in their regard and correct them when they do wrong and when they are truant. But it is also necessary to show them much affection for the good they do, rewarding them for every little thing—something to be done only with this kind of student and with the flighty. (CL 24: 183–194)

## **Expulsion**

It would be naive to believe that De La Salle and the Brothers always managed to win over a maladjusted student. On the contrary, there were students who were actually impossible to deal with, since they presented serious problems by their misbehavior and did not benefit from the instruction and the correction (CL 24: 148–149).

Feeling as he did about the importance of the Christian school as a way of escaping the oppression and degradation of the poverty and the moral dangers in which many of the pupils lived, De La Salle was very reluctant to dismiss any of them. We have already seen his concern that the parents themselves understand their responsibility for the Christian education of their children and be aided in meeting it.

Nonetheless, he and the Brothers quickly learned that they would have failures at times no matter how organized, how highly motivated, or how devoted they were. There would always be students whose conduct posed serious problems and created an environment in the school damaging to others, students who simply would not or could not benefit from an education. The only recourse even in those days was expulsion.

De La Salle insisted: “It must be an extraordinary thing to dismiss a student from school,” and this was to be done only after consultation with the Director and only upon his order, after consultation with the parents. “If the means taken to prevent or remedy their faults accomplish nothing, it may be better to dismiss them than to correct them, unless after speaking with the parents, it is found to be good to correct them.”

The examples given in the *Conduite* of cases requiring expulsion as the only remedy are similar to those which would lead to dismissal from school even today. The school was not to tolerate the licentious or those capable of corrupting others. Students troublesome to others or interfering with the lessons, the retarded who were uncontrollable, students who persistently disturbed good order, thieves, those who repeated serious faults and refused correction—all these were obviously destructive of the good discipline of the school, and if they remained incorrigible, they had to be expelled. Nor could those children remain in school whose parents

refused to see that they attended Mass and the catechism lesson (CL 24: 160).

In the matter of discipline and the enforcement of punishments, De La Salle began by moderating and regulating some of the practices which he saw were harmful and counterproductive. There remained, of course, vestiges of old ways and of old attitudes toward maladjusted children or slow learners, like the “bench for the ignorant” described in *L’Escole Paroissiale* (1654), but gradually De La Salle introduced into the schools the better, more productive means of discipline and correction developed by the Brothers.

The methods, guidelines, and restraints De La Salle presented for dealing with troubled children in the seventeenth century are considered fundamental in teaching learning disabled children today.

## Summary

The principal effects of the establishment of Christian Schools, according to De La Salle, were to prevent the disorders which arise when the child was left to himself, and to put a stop to the consequences of this neglect. But, as has been shown, the school was also called upon to remedy these disorders.

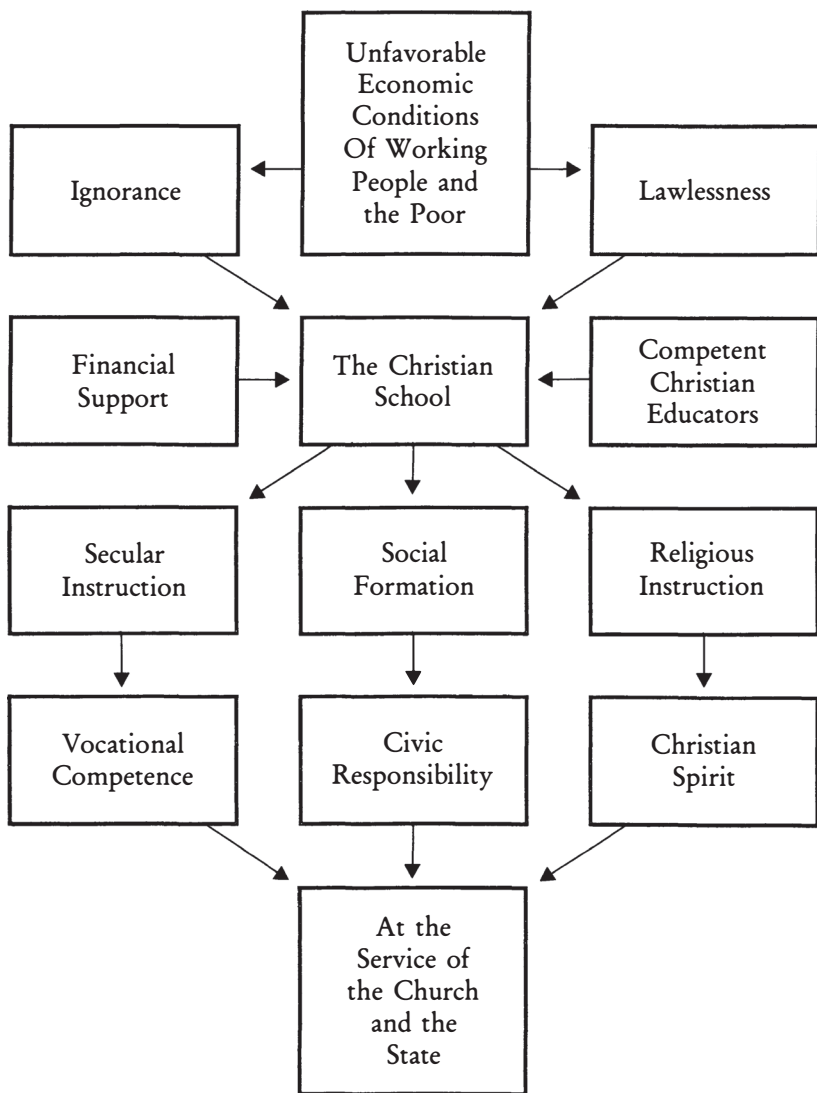
De La Salle believed that prevention consisted in keeping the students from acquiring bad habits and becoming dissolute. To achieve this, the Brother was to maintain a constant vigilance over the students and instill in their minds in a firm manner the truths of the faith.

Frequent instruction and the use of the sacraments were to be the remedies against bad habits contracted by children (CL 12: 79–80).

But it was the creation of a healthy environment that constituted the best means to prevent delinquency and the best remedy for the inadequacies of the family and of society. This healthy environment was the sum total of personal relations between teacher and student that were profoundly authentic and conformable to the most fundamental aspirations of human nature. The key figure in the educational environment was the person of the teacher, who in all his actions promoted the full development of the student, and by his demands and his efforts strove to improve the milieu of the child’s family and at the same time elicit its support. Thus, the Brother became a personal model for both the student and the family (CL 25: 17).

De La Salle began by reforming those pedagogical practices of his time which he judged most harmful. He introduced only gradually the better methods discovered by some of the Brothers. As has been said, there are

## An Outline of De La Salle's Thought on the Role of the Lasallian School



**This chart summarizes De La Salle's vision of the role of the Lasallian school: the poor, victimized by unfavorable economic conditions and consequent ignorance and lawlessness, would find in the Christian school, free and well-conducted, a way by which they could earn a decent living, live a good moral life, and serve society and the Church.**

vestiges of old practices, but the greater part of the guidelines De La Salle proposed can still be considered fundamental to a sound psychology of learning.

The theories and practices of De La Salle in the education of the maladjusted and educationally handicapped were developed in his practice in the parish or town schools. His experiences found a new application in the apostolate at Saint Yon. Here, in an establishment which was in fact one of the first of their tuition schools and which had been set up to support works other than a parish school, De La Salle and his Brothers expanded and adapted their early programs for discipline and correction and eventually came to work with troubled boys of many different types.

## **PART THREE**

### **Saint Yon**

## Source Material

With few exceptions, the references which constitute the evidence for the ideas advanced in Parts One and Two are contained in De La Salle's own writings or in material closely associated with the Institute. The range of documents employed in the description of life and work at Saint Yon is, however, more diverse and, quite understandably of uneven quality, consisting as it does of official correspondence and formal reports on the one hand, and occasional requests and observations on the part of individuals on the other. This material underscores both the multipurpose function of the Saint Yon establishment and the increasing number of areas over which the Brothers had little or no control.

One of De La Salle's publications is, nevertheless, a principal source for Part Three. This is his work written in 1703 and entitled *Les Règles de la Bienséance et de la Civilité chrétienne* (CL 19). Extensive use is also made of Blain's biography of De La Salle and of the biography by Brother Lucard, as well as the latter's *Annales de l'Institut des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes*, published in two volumes in Paris in 1883. Other important sources are Georges Rigault's more modern and more extensive history, published in nine volumes in Paris between 1936 and 1953, under the title *Histoire générale de l'Institut des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes*, and J. Guibert's *Life and Virtues of Saint John Baptist de La Salle*, 1912.

The great portion of source material for Part Three, including letters and reports written by the Brothers, government officials, and the inmates themselves, is drawn mainly from two collections, one in the archives of the Generalate of the Brothers in Rome (AMG) and the other in the archives of the Seine-Maritime Department in Rouen (ADSM).

The Rome archives include useful accounts of life at Saint Yon by Brother Emery, entitled *Des Pensionnaires* and *Pension de force ou Grande Pension*. The *Règlement pour les Frères de la petite pension* and *Coutumier de la maison de Saint-Yon* cited in this part are also in the Rome archives, as are *Livre de comptes de Saint-Yon*, *comptes de Pensionnaires de force*, and the *Registre d'Administration de Saint-Yon, 1777*. The *Coutumier de la Rossignolerie d'Angers, 1787* serves as a basis of comparison with the program at Saint Yon.

The archival collection at Rouen contains a good deal of official correspondence between the Brothers and various levels of government. Included in this material are many items which illuminate the more humane features of life in the institution. These sources include the *Memoire* of

Desurmont, an inmate of the house of detention, entitled *Observations sur la maison de Saint-Yon*, and eyewitnessed descriptions of the riot in 1774 under the title *Dossier de la revolte du 28 juillet 1774*. An important general resource is *Inventaire de la maison de Saint-Yon*, and, with particular regard to the daily schedule and the principal rules of the house of detention, *Règlement de la Pension de force* is invaluable.

Part Three also includes references to *The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle*; to Brother Latour: *Le Frère Irénée*, third edition (Paris, 1892); to François Farin: *Histoire de la ville de Rouen* (1738); to the school text of Brother Alberic, entitled *Traité d'Arithmétique à l'usage des pensionnaires et des écoliers des Frères des Ecoles chrétiennes* (Rouen, 1787); to the medical study published by L. Deboutteville and J. B. Parchappe on the mentally disturbed, *L'asile des aliénés* (Rouen, 1845) and to Canon Farcy: *Le Mémoire de Saint-Yon* (Rouen, 1936).

## 5

# The Manor of Saint Yon

Parts One and Two of this study have shown how the pedagogical principles and practices developed by De La Salle and his Brothers were used in assisting maladjusted and troubled children. This part of the study will focus on the application of those ideas in the unique establishment which evolved at Saint Yon, outside the city of Rouen on the Seine River, northwest of Paris.

The nature of the work at Saint Yon made it the most famous of the houses of the Brothers during the eighteenth century, and it soon became a model imitated and adopted elsewhere in France during the following century. The tradition of special services established at Saint Yon continues in establishments of the Brothers in one way or another even to this day.

The Manor at Saint Yon represents a significant expansion by De La Salle of the ministries of the Brothers. Saint Yon was not a free parish school or a foundation, but was owned by the Brothers and tuition fees were charged. It incorporated the novitiate and the residences of the superiors and the retired Brothers of the Institute, as well as the staffs and resident students of three educational institutions of very different purposes and modes of functioning. Saint Yon was an extraordinarily complex operation.

The original establishment at Saint Yon was a boarding school for sons of middle and upper class families, whose fees were to support the novitiate, which De La Salle had moved to Saint Yon from Paris. Soon a house of correction was added for maladjusted and troubled youths who could be more or less integrated with the boarding school program. Later, at the requests of civil authorities in Rouen and of the Royal Court, a house of detention for delinquent youths was opened as an alternative to a notorious city prison. Eventually, to this house were committed adult offenders and, in increasing numbers, the mentally ill. Thus there developed at Saint Yon three interrelated educational establishments, the boarding school (*pension libre*), the house of correction (*pension de correction*), and the house of detention (*pension de force*).

The main focus of this part of our study is on the house of detention, but first the boarding school and the house of correction will be described briefly, since the relationship among staffs and students of all three places had considerable relevance to the programs of rehabilitation which were attempted at Saint Yon.

Most of the original documents relating to Saint Yon date from the period after 1750. However, Brother Timothée, Superior General of the Brothers until 1751, had been personally trained by De La Salle and, having edited the latter's *Méditations* in 1730 and 1731, was in a unique position to see that the thought and practices of De La Salle were preserved throughout the Institute, and especially at Saint Yon. Brother Timothée was not a person to permit deviation from the spirit with which De La Salle had imbued his work. Later, in 1782, Brother Agathon, Superior General, approved the schedule and practices of Saint Yon because he judged them to be conformable to the original practices of the Institute. His testimony deserves to be cited:

We, the undersigned, Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, having seen the attached coutumier containing in sixty-six pages the customs and practices of our house of Saint Yon, approve that the Brothers continue to observe these customs and practices in the future.

Although many of the articles are not in accord with those of the ordinary houses of our schools, nor represent entirely, nor even in several things, our common rules, they may be presumed to have been established by John Baptist de La Salle, our Founder, and preserved by our predecessors for the sake of the greater good, the convenience, and the appropriateness to the kind of house that Saint Yon is.

This means that we ought not change any of these special arrangements, but rather support them, especially since any changes that could be made would produce no real advantage to the house nor to those who live there, but in certain respects could result even in less good, not to say harm. Given at Rouen, April 10, 1782. (AMG)

Until 1790 and the French Revolution the Brothers also conducted houses of detention in France at Maréville, near Nancy, and at Rosignolerie in Angers.

## The Boarding School

### Foundation

In the spring of 1705, the Brothers took charge of several charity schools in the city of Rouen. Although poorly paid, the Brothers took their work seriously and kept at it energetically, with each teacher in charge of 100 young boys. The results were unusually good, and some of the families belonging to the business class, becoming envious of the people whose

children had teachers who were so successful, wanted their children to have the same access to the practical knowledge and the solid religious learning that distinguished the Brothers' students. For this reason, they asked De La Salle to take their children as boarders at Saint Yon, a property comprising some 17 acres near Rouen, which he had just rented for a Motherhouse and a novitiate.

De La Salle needed income for the support of both the novitiate and the Brothers at Saint Yon, and saw that a boarding school could furnish it. He wrote to Brother Thomas, the treasurer at Saint Yon, in response to complaints about money: "I think that the means God wishes to use to provide for your living is that you take children in as boarders" (Letter 37, *The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle*, Lasallian Publications, 1988). He then directed that part of the building be furnished as a boarding school, and in October 1705 opened it to all children sent to him. He placed the new school under the care of one of the experienced Brothers and drew up a schedule and regulations appropriate to the age and background of the students.

Canon Blain, De La Salle's biographer, noted that this opportunity "conformed to [De La Salle's] way of working and was very acceptable to him" (CL 8: 33).

### **Program of Studies**

We have seen that the basic elements in the schools which De La Salle established were a well-organized operation, dedicated and competent teachers, and well-defined and appropriate discipline, together with an integrated, informed, practical, orderly, and individualized program which included student involvement. These elements, developed first in the parish and charity schools conducted by the Brothers, were applied to the complex undertaking which Saint Yon soon became and were the bases for the special education provided there.

The principles and methods of teaching in the boarding school at Saint Yon were those confirmed by the wisdom and experience of the preceding 25 years, and the program of studies was initially what it was at the other schools of the Brothers. The Brothers' boarding school aimed to form young men prepared to meet the material necessities of life as well as its moral obligations. There were elements drawn from the program of the Sunday school, from the Christian Academy which the Brothers had established in Paris, and from the short-lived boarding school for Irish émigrés also established by the Brothers in the capital. These programs provided the foundation for the further developments which time and circumstances required at Saint Yon.

Since Latin was excluded from the Brothers' schools until early in the twentieth century, the program of studies at the boarding school of

Saint Yon comprised courses other than the traditional classics. Almost from the start, in addition to the usual program in reading, writing, arithmetic, catechism, and bible history, courses in surveying, drafting, mathematics, grammar, geography, bookkeeping, and accounting were included in the boarding school. Later the program was expanded to include natural history, hydrography, advanced calculation, and modern languages.

Independently of the program usually identified with the Jesuit schools, the Brothers developed a new type of academic program for more advanced students. It was quite varied, very flexible, adapted to the ability of individual students and the needs of local regions. The Brothers in the course of the eighteenth century gave their special stamp to this type of program, not only at Saint Yon but also in their other boarding schools. It was only after he read the inspector's reports from Saint Yon that Victor Duruy, the Minister of Education for France, created the French programs of secondary education.

The academic program of the boarding school at Saint Yon was available also to those maladjusted students who later were sent to the house of correction. There were several reasons why De La Salle and the Brothers allowed these troubled youths to share the classrooms with the ordinary students of the boarding school. We have already seen that De La Salle and the Brothers held the strong conviction that a sound school environment was of itself an effective discipline for the maladjusted student. Furthermore, the Brothers saw that a practical education could provide the students with some access to an honest living. Finally, the association with the relatively well-adjusted students of the boarding school was seen as providing role models and corrective peer pressure.

### **Leisure Activities**

Although De La Salle and the Brothers were disposed to be quite severe on themselves, they were not unaware that recreation was indispensable for the development of a full and balanced personality. It is not surprising, then, to find at Saint Yon provision for the students to engage in physical exercise and active games, all positive, powerful elements in the educational process, particularly in a boarding school.

At Saint Yon freedom and balance were cultivated through long walks and a variety of games, such as "tennis, or croquet, bowling, ninepins, and badminton." The games could become violent, and records indicate that one student named Thorel, from Lisieux, was charged "4 livres, 10 sols, for 21 treatments for injury to both arms" (AMG).

Contemporary documents also list charges for other recreational but less violent activities, giving the prices of equipment for indoor games on rainy days, like chess, checkers, and backgammon. Charges were also

made for lessons in fencing, and even dancing, for which one student named Flavigny paid six livres a month (CL 19: 147).

The regulations for the Brothers of the boarding school prescribed a weekly lesson in singing at the beginning of the afternoon and two such lessons on Sunday, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon. According to the Rule of their community, the Brothers were to require their students to sing at least six verses of a hymn every day after the evening prayers. For this purpose De La Salle wrote and published a collection of hymns set to popular tunes. The words of the hymns were spiritual, but the melodies were songs of the day that the students knew: patriotic songs, witty melodies, sentimental songs called “brunettes,” and even love songs, as well as songs sung in taverns. This collection was used throughout the eighteenth century, as the several successive editions of the publication make clear. Brother Solomon noted that the boarders at Maréville “by order of the King” published some books of plainchant. At Saint Yon the ordinary boarders also had the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments. Contemporary records mention lessons on the violin and the flute and the purchase of a clarinet by the student Flavigny at the cost of 36 livres.

The schedule of the boarding school provided for drawing classes, and the ground plan of 1777 indicates the room where “sketching and decorative art are taught.” For the older students, the program of studies was more elaborate and involved elements of civil and military architecture, gardening, and landscaping.\*

## The House of Correction

### Foundation

Canon Blain, a witness to the events, described the opening of the house of correction:

The public, made aware of the skill of the Brothers in the successful teaching of the young, alerted families troubled by children who were unruly, incorrigible, reckless, and unmanageable, and advised them to seek admission to Saint Yon for the children in their care, with the promise that the children would be altogether different after their

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\*The ground plan shows residential areas for four divisions of boarders: the Saint Louis, Saint Joseph, Saint Nicholas, and Saint Charles sections. These were probably divisions by age; groupings according to academic ability and success took place in the classroom. BFH

discharge than at the time of their entrance. Many parents were willing to take advantage of this, and entrusted the rehabilitation of their children to teachers whom they recognized as more capable than they were themselves. Soon the school was full. (CL 8: 32)

François Farin, historian of the city of Rouen, reported in 1738 the judgment of his contemporaries:

The President, who by his care and unusual devotion was led to profit by the benefits and success of the schools conducted by the Brothers, was not satisfied to establish schools in the principal sections of the city for the children of the common people, but desired further in that same year (1705) to open a house that would rescue from licentiousness the young people of better families. This project was carried out in the house of Saint Yon.

Until that time Rouen had for the purpose of boarding and rehabilitating young offenders only the Tower of the Libertines (*Tour-des-Libertins*), also called the Tower for the Normands (*Tour-aux-Normands*), located near the Porte Guillaume-Lion in an unsanitary section of the city. Parents demanded an alternative to having their children locked up in the Tower, where the cells were very small and a deplorable promiscuity prevailed. The Tower had a bad reputation even up to the time of the French Revolution. Requests to transfer delinquents from the Tower to the house of correction at Saint Yon became numerous. One such request reads: “The parents of the young man D. were hopeful that he could be corrected and that a less rigid and less severe imprisonment would contribute to his return to good living” (ADSM).

## Integration with the Boarding School

The conditions of the house of correction are described by Blain:

These young men are closely supervised . . . and practically tied to the hand of a Brother, who never leaves them and always keeps an eye on them, not allowing them the chance to go off by themselves or to escape from his surveillance. Nevertheless, their education is no different from that of the ordinary boarders. They all have the same schedule of prayers. They receive [the same] lessons of religion and catechism. They are taught how to receive the sacraments, and they are prepared to receive First Holy Communion if they have not done so already; and if they have done so, they are taught how to make up for their past life by a good general confession. In a word, they live as in a seminary or a very regular community, with a scheduled program of prayer or instruction suitable to their age and condition. They eat in the common dining room with the Brothers and

are witness to the Brothers' practices of piety. This is what usually motivates them and inspires them to return to God. (CL 8: 32)

Describing a house of correction similar to Saint Yon and staffed by the Brothers at Maréville, a contemporary wrote:

Young people, while they are still minors, are admitted on the authority of their parents. They attend the classes in religion, writing, arithmetic, spelling, geography, and music, and in class they read all the subjects capable of enlightening the mind and moving the heart to good behavior.

Brother Lucard noted that the discipline at Saint Yon was very strict for those who had just entered the house of correction but was relaxed to the extent that these boarders showed signs of reformation. Ultimately students from the house of correction who showed that they might benefit from the change were transferred to the classes of the boarding school. We might consider this practice an early form of "mainstreaming."

The document called *lettres patentes*, a form of state certification, describes Saint Yon as a place that could well serve as a "school of wisdom . . . for the children who have been placed there as boarders" (ADSM).

The success of this project was not slow in coming. Thus Blain was able to write: "It is unbelievable . . . how many rebellious and incorrigible children have lost their wildness and their irreligion in this house" (CL 8: 32).

## A Therapeutic Setting

The house of correction, as part of the total operation at Saint Yon, was integrated into the ordinary boarding school. The goal was to have those in the house of correction do everything together with the ordinary boarders. Both groups of students were treated in the same way, except that those in the house of correction were more closely supervised and were kept under a closer discipline. To the extent that they became better behaved, they were given more freedom and ultimately were considered ordinary boarders.

This close association between the ordinary boarders and those in the house of correction had an exceptional educational and rehabilitative value. As a matter of fact, certain authors today call for precisely this kind of arrangement in programs of social rehabilitation. According to them, the chances of successful rehabilitation are better if young people in need of special supervision are mixed in with a large majority of so-called normal students. This phenomenon is called the "halo effect" by German authors. If those needing rehabilitation are simply put together by themselves in a closed setting, they are subject to enormous peer

pressure. The destructive subculture which develops among those needing rehabilitation themselves is more effective than the education intended to correct them. In the program of the house of correction at Saint Yon, the peer influence among those needing rehabilitation was under the very close supervision of the Brothers, so that the positive influence of the ordinary boarders became significant.

For the inmates of the house of correction who participated with the regular boarders, the highly organized academic programs, the discipline, the religious atmosphere, the recreation, the opportunities for creative and cultural activities, and the concern and example of the Brothers must have had a healing influence.

The fact that a student needing rehabilitation knew that he might eventually be able to participate in the same programs with the ordinary boarders was bound to produce positive results, for it provided the student with an ever present goal which he could see clearly.

The house of correction at Saint Yon deserves credit for rehabilitating a large number of young, maladjusted students during nearly half a century. It put into practice original and successful methods the value of which is recognized today in modern theories of special education.

## Typical Problems

Yet it would be illusory to think that the Brothers did not encounter difficulties in the work of rehabilitating maladjusted students. That the ordinary boarders and those of the house of correction lived together did not simplify the task. Problems in the original boarding school, in fact, began to emerge because of this union.

One of the first references to these difficulties was noted in the book of regulations for the Brothers of the boarding school. Here it was prescribed that "in order to prevent runaways," the Brothers "not be absent from the outdoor recreation."

In 1745 the so-called "Polycarp Affair" created a sensation to which Rigault has devoted several pages. Brother Polycarp, one of the Brothers at Saint Yon, is depicted by Rigault as a rebel who addressed his grievances against the Superior General to the members of Parliament and to the archbishop. He accused the Brother Superior of having disregard for ecclesiastical and civil authorities, and of being a poor administrator (Rigault II: 301-309).

The greed with which the Brother Superior General desires to accumulate money has led him for a long time to prefer to save money rather than to preserve the innocence and the health of the boarders or to provide for the most pressing needs of the Brothers of Saint Yon. When the Brother presently in charge of the ordinary boarders

was placed in this position, he discovered that a frightful disorder reigned among the boarders of the house of correction. They were openly practicing an unmentionable vice. (ADSM)

Brother Polycarp, who apparently was the Brother in charge mentioned here, goes on to report that frequent and serious representations were made to the Brother Superior concerning this deplorable situation and remedies were proposed: lights, additional supervisory staff, and the construction of separate sections to protect the innocent. But, he declares, nothing was done, and all proposals were rejected, solely because of the costs involved. While the facts surrounding these charges may be somewhat exaggerated, a more objective document does reveal a real difficulty at the root of the conflict. On May 15, 1745, the Brother Superior and his assistants wrote:

For the good of the boarding school, we will construct rooms with windows, which can be built in the large dormitory of the senior boarding school, in order to separate those who are corrupting the innocent. (ADSM)

Another document in the Motherhouse archives states that even “the ordinary boarders themselves have caused great concern at Saint Yon,” and reports that some among them planned to hang one of the Brothers whom they disliked. Their classroom was some distance from the others, and they were able to put a large spike into a beam of the ceiling. Several planned to string a rope around the Brother’s neck while the notebooks were being corrected. When one of their accomplices revealed the plot, the administration decided that there would no longer be any classes held “in a place so separated from the others” (AMG).

In a letter dated January 30, 1756, M. Saint Florentin, one of the Royal Ministers, mentions a deposition concerning a rebellion of the students of the boarding school. While recommending that no publicity be given to this episode so as not to discredit the school or disgrace several good families, the State Minister announced that His Majesty would consider what means ought to be taken to prevent any recurrence of such violence (ADSM).

### **Closing of the House of Correction**

Eventually, changing circumstances brought about the closing of the house of correction at Saint Yon, although the other functions at Saint Yon were continued.

In December 1758, M. Saint Florentin informed the Chief Justice of the Courts of Rouen that the King had received complaints about the practice at Saint Yon (and other places) of bypassing the judgment of the

courts and receiving “the sons of prominent families or others for incarceration solely on the basis of complaints by the parents.” Saint Florintin appointed a certain M. De Brou to investigate. Shortly thereafter, De Brou reported to the Minister that the Brothers had agreed no longer to receive such commitments to the house of correction. He submitted a signed acceptance of the following Royal Ordinance:

My dear Friend. After due consideration we have decided that no children or any other person regardless of age or status may be deprived by you of their freedom for the purpose of rehabilitating their behavior or for any other purpose whatsoever.

We further order expressly that you receive into your house of detention only those subjects of ours whom we deem deserving to be sent by our authorized agents and by one of our secretaries of state. . . . Done at Versailles, 14 December 1757. LOUIS.

Below, under the date of December 22, 1757, Brother Claude, Superior, signed his acceptance of this “order of his Majesty” (ADSM).

Some time later, De Brou reported to Saint Florentin that he had completed his assignment and that the Brothers had asked him if they should set free immediately all those who had been detained in their house of correction “without being committed there by royal decree, several of whom were mentally ill.” These were transferred to the house of detention. It is clear that the royal decision was aimed both at closing the house of correction and at terminating the practice of accepting into the house of detention persons not committed by royal decree or *lettre de cachet* (ADSM).

The question of what to do with the mentally ill was settled by transferring them to the house of detention. Others incarcerated in the house of correction were apparently released (ADSM).

It seems that closing the house of correction did not prevent the Brothers from continuing to receive as ordinary boarders some young men who were in difficulty or who were maladjusted. There is mention also of the transfer of three young men from the boarding school to the house of detention. In addition, many documents in the archives at Rouen report the continued detention at Saint Yon of youths between 13 and 19 years of age (ADSM).

Two factors emerge here which become prominent later in similar difficulties in the house of detention. One was the increasing use of Saint Yon to rehabilitate youth far more severely maladjusted than those for which the program was originally intended, troubled students for whom the Brothers may not have been adequately prepared. The other was the growing popular opposition to arbitrary and capricious incarceration of persons without the proper authorization of the courts.

## 6

# The House of Detention: Organization

### Foundation

Blain has noted that the success of the Saint Yon house of correction attracted other persons much more difficult to reform. Lucard, Guibert, Rigault, and Merlaud, all historians of the Institute, believe that the idea of establishing a house of detention at Saint Yon originated with Nicolas-Pierre Camus De Pontcarré, First President of the Parliament of Normandy and a friend and benefactor of De La Salle. He visited Saint Yon in order to relax from the heavy weight of his official duties, and seeing the admirable order there and the control that the Brothers had over their students, thought that this was clearly the answer to a serious problem in the city of Rouen (Rigault I: 402).

De Pontcarré was disturbed by the miserable effects which the city prison was having on young delinquents. He was convinced that the prison was justified as a way to expiate crimes and to administer justice, but knew that promiscuity prevailed there and that there was no positive moral influence. Instead of correcting young people, the prison fostered their evil inclinations. With this in mind, De Pontcarré asked De La Salle in 1715 to add another program to his projects at Saint Yon and to accept young men whom Parliament or the King would commit to him by a *lettre de cachet*. A *lettre de cachet* was a document bearing a royal seal or 'cachet,' and authorizing the incarceration of the individual named, without action by the courts. (See Appendix A.)

De Pontcarré's request involved housing and rehabilitating not only rebellious adolescents but also youths who had caused some scandal or compromised their own reputation and that of their family. It required the Brothers to work with adults who, because of their social situation and the need to protect their family's name, had to avoid the shame of being convicted and sentenced to prison. Eventually, the inmates comprised a motley and sorry group which included members of the nobility, religious and priests, and sons of upper and middle-class families. The city of Rouen at that time had only the infamous *Tour-des-Libertins* in which to imprison such people (ADSM).

De La Salle was aware of the nature of the task proposed to him. He knew well what was taking place in the society of his day and had on several occasions visited inmates of the prisons of Paris (CL 8: 333-334). Still he hesitated to take action, because this new work had

in no way entered his plans before. Up to that time, De La Salle had considered that his vocation and that of the Brothers was the teaching of the children in ordinary schools, with particular preference for the free schools and schools of the parish.

Nevertheless, De La Salle finally agreed to open a house of detention at Saint Yon, perhaps largely out of consideration for De Pontcarré, whom he counted among his greatest benefactors. In any case, from then on there were three kinds of boarders at Saint Yon: youths enrolled by free choice, maladjusted or rebellious adolescents, and prisoners committed to the house of detention (CL 8: 33). All paid for room, board, and special services within a wide range of costs. Brothers were forbidden to receive any gifts from the inmates.

By virtue of the *lettres patentes*, which officially authorized its foundation, Saint Yon was under the authority of the First President and the General Procurator of the Rouen Parliament; this arrangement naturally included the house of detention (ADSM).

## Staff

De La Salle was always concerned that his establishments be staffed by competent, dedicated Brothers. The *Conduite*, the teacher-training programs, the structures he created for the management of his schools all make this idea quite clear. Of course, competence and professionalism were not understood as they are today, but, taken in the context of the seventeenth century, De La Salle was a pioneer in preparing teachers.

The work at Saint Yon was especially demanding. The place was large and complex, and several of its services were new to the Brothers. The house of detention required teachers of the highest calibre, for ultimately it treated in the same organization older persons seriously disturbed, gravely antisocial, and mentally ill.

By the decree of imprisonment, the Brother Director of Saint Yon was personally charged with responsibility for those in detention. In this task he was assisted by the Brother Prefect or Director of the house of detention, called in some documents the “master of the adult boarders” (AMG). Apparently, at the beginning when the number of the inmates was still small, the Brother Prefect of the house of detention (the title most often used) did not have any assistants. Not until a note dated May 1717 is there mention of an assistant master of those in detention. In 1725 the master of the adult boarders is an assistant to the Prefect of the house of detention, and in 1745 a Brother adds to his signature, “in service, employed with the adult boarders” (Rigault II: 107–108).

As the number of those in the house of detention increased, so did the types of inmates, the problems, and the need for intensified and trained

supervision. It became necessary to have a Brother supervise each hall of the house of detention. During recreation each group was supervised by a Brother, and at the same time another Brother searched the cells. At night there was a guard both inside and outside the house.

Contemporary documents also mention a Brother Gatekeeper of the house of detention, a Brother responsible for locking up the inmates, a Brother who shaved them, and a Brother in charge of their singing. Since some of the inmates became ill, doctors had to be brought in. There was a Brother Infirmarian, as well as a Brother appointed to watch over the sick, and others as needed. The entire staff had to have a great deal of prudence and the ability to work together. These two requirements were repeated as a refrain in the regulations for the Brother Infirmarian.

While it is not possible to give a complete list of the Brothers Prefects of the house of detention, some names are given in various documents:

Brother Ambroise	1716	Brother Memin	1766
Brother Dosithée	1718	Brother Bon	1769
Brother André	1725	Brother Jean-Marie	1774
Brother Dominique	1725	Brother Josaphat	1774–78
Brother Stanislas	1734	Brother Pontian	1778–82
Brother Omer	1745	Brother Solenne	1782–86
Brother Pharon	1747	Brother Mansuy	1786–92

Six of these 14 Brothers were spoken of with praise in the records available. Brother Ambroise, for example, was referred to as one of the most distinguished representatives of the Lasallian tradition and one of the most competent Directors the house ever had. Brother Dosithée, later an Assistant to the Superior General, was described as one of the most typical of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Brother André and Brother Josaphat later became Directors of the large boarding schools of Nantes and Saint Omer, respectively. Brother Bon was described as a remarkable man, and of Brother Jean-Marie it was said that he possessed very fine qualities. Concerning the others, there are no contemporary documents which give any judgment. This speaks in their favor, since every abuse in dealing with inmates was noted with strong disapproval. The only targets of such denunciations were Brother Stanislas and Brother Memin (Rigault II: 149–150; 175).

The name of Brother Stanislas appears in a periodical critical of Saint Yon, in which this Brother was described as an authoritarian personality. The author of the article, who was writing on behalf of one of the inmates, said that since the appointment of Brother Stanislas to the position of Prefect of the house of detention, the inmate De Guisainville had experienced nothing but unkindness and gross insult. For the past five or six years, “he has had no pens or ink; during almost all of the winter

of 1737, there was no heat and none of the so-called recreation.” There is no way of knowing whether or not this accusation was an exaggeration.

Brother Memin was involved in the rebellion of December 5, 1766, which will be described later. This episode had serious consequences: a loss of confidence on the part of the public and a loss of morale on the part of the inmates. Furthermore, the discipline imposed after the rebellion frequently became itself a cause for further trouble.

A formal charge came from the archdiocesan chancery following another rebellion, in 1774. At that time General Marescot, the Vicar of Rouen, gave many reasons why the civil authority had assumed control of Saint Yon, going so far as to say that the Brothers needed to be trained and supervised, that they knew little about their duties, and that their management of those in detention was characterized by ignorance (Rigault II: 350).

Desurmont, an inmate who had been a member of the King’s bodyguard, did not treat the Brothers gently in the memoir he wrote. He was astonished that the Brothers, themselves drawn from the lower class of society and employed in teaching the poor, would carry weight with the civil authorities, and he condemned the Brothers for doing all in their power to prevent any complaints against them from leaking outside. He then went on to give a whole series of examples to support his allegations (ADSM).

The documents that indicate difficulties are, however, relatively few for a period covering 77 years, and since ecclesiastic and civil authorities continued to rely on Saint Yon, one may conclude that the prefects of the house of detention were generally competent and that defects were regularly corrected. It is perhaps more relevant to note that the conflicts which made life in the house of detention difficult were heightened by the social differences between inmates who were of the nobility and accustomed to a life of ease, and the Brothers, who were from a working-class background (ADSM).

### **Admission by Order of the Royal Court**

The police were responsible for arresting and transporting persons committed by royal decree, under royal seal or a *lettre de cachet*. These outcasts often included dissolute, corrupt, unbalanced individuals who were unable to get along in their family and social life. According to Blain, the transfer was not ordinarily done without a great deal of resistance on the part of some, who showed their ugly mood with violent outbursts of anger as they arrived at the house of Saint Yon (CL 8: 33).

The regulations for the house of detention concerning admission stated that upon arrival persons brought to Saint Yon under royal decree were

to hand over to the Brother Director all silver, gold, or any other item of value, as well as knives, swords, scissors, and other possibly dangerous instruments. The Director was required to give a strict and detailed account of everything he received (ADSM).

Brother Emery, the early historian of the house of detention, includes these graphic details:

When a prisoner arrives, he will be led or brought to a cell and, while he is forced to lie on the bed, will be stripped of everything. All his clothing will be searched for knife, scissors, dagger, razor, calipers, or other dangerous weapons. Then his clothes will be returned to him.

The purely administrative side of the process was very simple, merely to register the admission of the inmate to the house and to add a few relevant details. The fact of reception was reported as follows:

Sir, I have received the royal decree that your excellency has done me the honor of sending for detention of M. . . . I have the honor of conforming to this request and of keeping the young man in our house during the time prescribed. I am with profound respect, Sir, . . . . (ADSM)

The civil status of the inmate was recorded in the register of admission, and each name was followed by an alias chosen from the Church's liturgical calendar and always preceded by the word "Saint." During his entire internment, the inmate would be designated by this assumed name. In this way, his true identity would not be known in the house except to the superiors. The reason for this alias was, of course, to protect family reputation.

The newcomers were at first isolated from the other inmates. Blain described the purpose of this practice:

Left to themselves, they have leisure to reflect in a way they never did before and to review their lives in the bitterness of their souls. Shut in by four walls, they learn in solitude what the world keeps hidden, and they can consider the truths they have forgotten or wanted to forget. Forced to remember that there is a hereafter and that their prison is only a shadow of the one in hell, they learn little by little to regret the sins that condemn them to hell, to fear God, and to return to him. It is true that often in the beginning they defile their prison by oaths and blasphemies prompted by rage and spite, but often also they find there a grace which moves them, and which, changing their hearts, causes tears and compunction to replace the expressions of their fury and despair. When they appear to be truly repentant, the door of their cell is opened, and they are given the freedom to follow the

program of religious activities that take place in the house. And so it is that charity completes the work of their conversion which the fear of hell had begun. (CL 8: 33)

## Legal Status

The legal status of the inmates can be inferred from another letter, in which the inmate Desurmont declared that the civil officials always considered Saint Yon as a place of exile and of temporary seclusion, and that it was not their intention that the inmates be regarded as prisoners. To support this position, Desurmont cites two arguments.

As a result of action by the court, the registrar for the house has ordered that the term *prisoner* not be used at all, but only the term *boarder*. During the 60 or so years that the Brothers have kept boarders, the boarders have for more than 50 years enjoyed not only the freedom to move about the house, but also, three times a week, to go for walks of five or more miles with the Brothers in the surroundings of Rouen. (ADSM)

The fact that the families and not the government paid the room and board is further proof to Desurmont that those in detention were not criminals. "The royal authority and our families," he wrote, "by placing us in religious houses desired to save us from a public prison and thus keep us from any kind of criminal record, so that we could eventually hold those positions which our social status leads us to expect in the world" (ADSM).

The titles given in the decree of imprisonment for those incarcerated at Saint Yon were "boarders by order of the royal court," "senior boarders," "boarders in detention," or simply, "inmates."

The magistrates could correspond freely with the inmates, visit them, hear their complaints, and give directions to the Brothers. Although this interaction had some benefits, it also had some disadvantages. Rigault draws the following conclusion after describing the well-known rebellion of 1766 in the house of detention:

The principal cause [of the rebellion] can be found in the very character of the house of detention, where the Brothers had only a delegated authority. The authority of the Brothers was at the whim of the interventions of people who had power at court. The Brothers were not completely free to change the rules and customs, the personnel, or even choose the administrators. They had taken on a thankless, difficult, and sometimes overwhelming task. Always on the alert for some mischief or prank of the inmates, always subject to protests and

condemnations, or under the threat of investigations that could weaken their influence, they continually had to await decisions from outsiders, which were often slow in coming or which arrived at inappropriate moments. (Regault II: 326)

## Costs

When someone was placed in the house of detention, all the expenses were charged to the person who made the commitment. The minimum rate was 400 livres a year, but the wealthiest paid as much as 1,000. No one was admitted unless costs could be guaranteed, and the Brothers insisted on knowing who was to make the payment. The basic charge covered only room and board; every other expense was charged separately. This arrangement was clearly a weakness, perhaps even an injustice in the system, for the conveniences of heat, light, linen and other clothing, the extras in food and drink, and extra, costly medical care were obtained only on payment over and above the cost of room and board. The quality of the accommodations depended on the generosity of the one making the initial arrangement, and so it happened that some inmates lacked what they needed. The archives of Saint Yon have preserved evidence that the Brothers or the state officials interceded with those paying for the room and board “to improve the conditions of the prisoners,” and to some extent they were able to alleviate the situation. This was also the case in the house of correction (ADSM).

It was probably to make a little money to buy certain comforts that some inmates themselves sold such things as clothing and small items to one another.

Desurmont listed a number of financial details that are quite interesting but not otherwise documented:

- ♦ Access to the library cost 24 livres a year.
- ♦ Every inmate paid 15 livres a year for a pair of sheets and two napkins a week.
- ♦ For paper, pens, and ink there was a charge of 12 livres a year.
- ♦ A cord of firewood cost 34 livres.
- ♦ A fireplace rented for 34 livres.
- ♦ A charge was made for the repair of clothing and shoes.
- ♦ Broken glasses and dishes were also put on the bill.

Desurmont also mentioned the sale of candles, tobacco, and matches. For those who could pay, a barber was on call, and hair oils, powder, and handkerchiefs could be bought. Inmates could get thousands of items if they had the money, he insisted, including pins and needles, ear swabs and toothpicks, and for anyone planning to host a party, coffee, tea, chocolate, and liqueurs were available.

Where were the inmates able to buy all these things? Unless they were forbidden to improve on the standard provisions, they had to find a way themselves to combine the restrictions of their legal detention with arrangements that the Brothers were willing to allow them. Desurmont stresses the restrictions that were applied to these arrangements. He writes:

The Brothers require us to buy everything we need from them, at a price which they fix. Not only are we forbidden to buy anything from the outside, but they take every means to make it impossible for us to do so. They have a shop supplied with very poor merchandise which they buy very cheaply and sell to us at a very high price. Without leaving home, they have discovered the gold mines of Peru. (ADSM)

### **Daily Schedule**

The daily schedule for the inmates of the house of detention was established on two basic principles: that the inmates should be occupied in an orderly and purposeful way, and that they should, as far as practicable, participate in the regular life of the Saint Yon Manor. The program in the accompanying timetable reflects a rather monastic organization, but, combined with the presence and vigilance of the concerned staff and the example of the students from the boarding school and the house of correction, it provided that environment of discipline, that sense of direction which would enable the maladjusted and emotionally and morally handicapped youths committed to the house to gain control over their passions and appetites and bring some purpose to their otherwise disordered lives.

This schedule for those inmates of the house of detention who were permitted to join programmed activities of the other schools at Saint Yon is based on a note by Brother Emery.

#### **Work Days:**

- 6:15 A.M. Rising
- 6:45 A.M. Prayer in common
- 7:00 A.M. Mass  
Breakfast
- 8:00 A.M. Work of choice: class, shops, cell
- 10:00 A.M. Return to cell
- 11:30 A.M. Prayer in common  
Dinner  
Recreation
- 1:00 P.M. Prayer in common

- 1:30 P.M. Work of choice as in the morning
- 4:00 P.M. Return to cell
- 5:45 P.M. Spiritual reading in common
- 6:30 P.M. Supper  
Recreation
- 8:00 P.M. Prayer in common  
Return to cell
- 8:45 P.M. Retiring

### **Sundays and Feasts:**

Until breakfast as on workdays

- 8:00 A.M. Return to cell
- 10:45 A.M. Spiritual reading in common (except on days when  
there is High Mass)
- 11:30 A.M. Prayer in common  
Dinner  
Recreation
- 1:30 P.M. Prayer in common  
Return to cell
- 3:00 P.M. Vespers  
Recreation
- 5:45 P.M. Return to cell

The rest as on workdays.

The afternoon schedule for the Wednesday or Thursday holiday was similar to that on workdays, except that recreation was extended to 3:00 P.M.

### **The Care of the Sick**

The complex operation of Saint Yon and especially of the house of detention could not function properly merely on regulations, a school schedule, religious practices, and discipline. Many people came who were ill or soon became sick; in addition, Saint Yon eventually accepted elderly people, the mentally retarded, and the mentally ill. All these required special care. It was in light of the experience through the years with such people that the Brothers composed a book of regulations for the Brother Infirmarian. Although by no means a medical book, it is a good catalogue of directives for the proper management of the infirmary.

It has already been pointed out that the families of the inmates rather than the Brother Infirmarian ultimately determined the number of medical

visits and surgical services, since the families paid all the costs of confinement. But the Brothers did intervene occasionally to ask the families to assume further expenses.

Solicitude was shown to the sick; for example, Brother Solenne, one of the last of the Prefects, wrote a letter to the city superintendent regarding one inmate who was ill: "I have been urged, Sir, to put pressure on the Le Blaise family to help their son, because of the report made to me about his condition and because my concern for him constrained me to appeal to them as I did" (ADSM). An inmate wrote in the same spirit: "I declare from the bottom of my heart and with all the sincerity you can imagine, that I would have been buried a long time ago if it were not for the wise, prudent, and worthy action of the Brother Superior General and the Brother Director" (ADSM).

According to the book of regulations for the Brother Infirmarian, the care of the sick was carried out by doctors, surgeons, dentists, the Brother Infirmarian and his assistants, and "those assigned to watch the sick." Medical students were allowed to accompany their teachers if the teachers asked for their help for some serious operation. Brother Solenne's letter also indicates that treatments were administered only by doctors affiliated with the house, and this practice was "based on the welfare of the one who is sick, as well as the maintenance of good order" (ADSM).

The Brother Infirmarian was further required to point out to the doctor that

... a number of the inmates feel that others have given up on them and that they are being used as guinea pigs or neglected altogether. It is necessary to give them much attention in order to disabuse them of this false notion, and for this purpose [the Infirmarian] should ask the doctors to give the inmates all the time needed to explain to them their illness, pains, and troubles.

And in the same book of regulations, doctors were reminded that

Because it is important for the doctors to have a thorough knowledge of the character, attitudes, and behavior of the inmates whom they are to treat, before visiting an inmate they will listen attentively to the Brother Prefect or the Brother Infirmarian, who will make it a duty to meet with them, so they can keep the particular qualities of each inmate in mind when consulting or prescribing for him.

The doctors' visits took place daily from 8:00 A.M. to 10:00 A.M. and from 2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. The Brother Infirmarian visited the sick inmates several times daily, and those who were seriously ill were watched day and night.

The book of regulations of the Brother Infirmarian contains frequent reminders that cleanliness is needed in the infirmary and with all the materials used for the sick; the pharmacy must be well maintained. There are articles on prudence and sensitivity. The Brother Infirmarian is told not to allow himself to be won over by gifts or by promises made by the inmates. Another proscription forbids him any familiarity with the sick, because most of the inmates “have neither faith, nor law, nor morals, nor shame.”

Sensitivity was stressed in other ways also. The regulations required the Brother Infirmarian to extend to the sick affection, gentleness, and courtesy in the services “required by their condition and according to the orders given him.” He was to make sure that no one visited the sick while they were resting, entered noisily, or spoke loudly, and no one was to say anything that could disturb the sick, sadden them, or trouble their peace of soul.

Everyone having contact with the sick was asked “to keep as an inviolable secret the names, lives, behavior, and status of the inmates.” The Brother Infirmarian also had to require these people to speak softly when they were in the inmates’ cells, so that their neighboring cellmates might not hear what they ought not to know. Quiet was also required in the corridors or other areas of the unit for the same reason. The book of regulations for the Brother Infirmarian of the institution at Maréville states: “The doctors are asked not to speak in Latin or German with any inmate, but only in the vernacular and in an intelligible voice, and to write their prescriptions in the same language.” Similar regulations were probably in force at Saint Yon.

Remarkable cures were not lacking at Saint Yon. The most celebrated was that of Nicolas-Louis du Lac de Montisambert, younger brother of Brother Irénée. One day (in 1731?), while out walking by himself, Nicolas fell into a frozen pond. He was pulled out alive, but the shock of the accident seriously damaged his nervous system and left him subject to spells of delirium and unconsciousness which eventually led to psychosis. When their mother died, Brother Irénée secured authorization to have Nicolas placed in the house of detention at Saint Yon, where every possible care was given him. Some years later, Nicolas was cured and able to return to his family chateau. Cures were not common, however, and many of the sick suffered ten or more years before death intervened.

According to contemporary records, 125 inmates died between 1728 and 1790 and were buried in the local cemetery. Sixteen were under 20 years of age, 56 were over 60. While most died of illness, some died suddenly or were suicides. According to Brother Emery, “one cut his throat with a razor, another hanged himself, others died of unknown causes.” If it happened that the infirmarian or any other Brother found an inmate

dead in his cell, he was directed to leave the body just as he found it, lock the door, and alert the Brother Prefect. He was to keep silent on the matter and be careful not to arouse any suspicion of what had happened. In each instance, the doctor was to be called so that the death certificate signed by him would "acquit the Brothers of their legal obligation in this matter." It is significant that the regulations of the house prescribed in minute detail the ceremonies for burial (AMG).

### **The Mentally Ill**

In a letter to the State Minister Saint Florentin, M. De Brou, who had made the investigation of the disorders previously discussed, reported that the Brothers had been admitting the mentally ill to the house. The earliest reference to this is dated May 23, 1726, in a contract between the Brothers at Saint Yon and J. B. Machuel, a publisher of Rouen, concerning his son, Sauveur, who was mentally ill. In consideration of a payment of 2,000 livres and an annual sum of 88 livres, the Brothers agreed to accept the young man for as long as was needed. This contract, "effected in the chapter room of the community in the presence of all the Brothers living there gathered at the sound of the bell and signed about noon by all those present," is important, for it opened the house of detention for the first time to a mentally ill person. The 2,000 livres was to be used to construct a building with courtyard within two years, presumably for this new service.

At this time in France, the mentally ill were most often treated with contempt rather than with care, and before the development at Saint Yon there were no suitable shelters for them in Rouen. Some of these unfortunate people had been kept in the *Tour-des-Libertins*, which was also known under the name of the *Tour-des-Insensés*, while other mentally ill were housed at the *Dépôt de Mendicité*, in a building presumably designed specifically for them, a solid construction of stone, with cells shut tight by massive doors.

A number of therapeutic interventions on behalf of the mentally ill are mentioned in the regulations for the Brother Infirmarian, for example, drugs, diets, baths, and bleedings. For warmth in winter the sick were provided with a stove. Later, Dr. Parchappe, chief physician of the ward for the mentally ill at Saint Yon, wrote the following on the care of the sick under his charge:

Warm baths with the application of cold water to the head, as well as baths of affusion repeated one, two, or three times a day for one or more or a greater number of days, constitute the principal curative therapy for the acutely mentally ill and the palliative therapy for the chronically mentally ill. Warm baths with cold applications are more

successful with the manic. Baths of affusion are especially useful with the depressed. . . . The method of cooling down the patient is indicated with the manic. Bloodletting by means of bleeding, leeching, and scarification has an incontestable utility and is often very appropriate for calming excess agitation encountered in other forms of acute and chronic mental illness. . . . Prudent and timely purgatives, sedatives, and bloodletting are of great value in the treatment of the mentally ill.

Some of these therapeutic procedures were employed at Saint Yon until the Manor was closed at the time of the French Revolution.

But the care of the mentally ill was not limited to these medical techniques. Dr. Parchappe reported that medical treatment is of itself less helpful than generally admitted and often does not have all its efficacy unless joined to treatment of the individual's moral state, and probably even treatment of the whole moral condition. The frequent lack of efficacy in the treatments undertaken by a doctor in the home, he added, is a powerful motive for favoring establishment and development of facilities especially designed for the treatment of mental illness.

By the expression, "the treatment of the individual's moral state," Dr. Parchappe meant the love that could be brought to the sick by a caring person. By the treatment of the "whole moral condition," he meant holistic treatment, including all the help that religion, work, and relaxation, such as recreation, reading, and singing, could bring to bear. These conditions had already been provided in the house of detention directed by the Brothers years before Dr. Parchappe arrived.

Records show that as the eighteenth century drew to a close, the number of mentally ill persons committed to Saint Yon increased dramatically until it reached seventy-five percent of the inmate population, shortly before the Manor was closed by the authorities about 1790 (See Table 4). Whether the charge made by one of the inspectors that the Brothers were unprepared for this sort of work is legitimate remains to be studied. Perhaps the pressure of numbers combined with the imminent collapse of the *ancien régime* created a situation to which the Brothers could not adapt.

Nonetheless, reports also show that during its best years, Saint Yon rehabilitated many troubled and emotionally handicapped youths. To this day it stands as an excellent example of the adaptability of basic Lasallian principles to extraordinary situations and needs.

## Meals

According to Brother Emery, a historian of the house of Saint Yon, those in detention had three meals daily: breakfast at 7:30 A.M., dinner near noon, and supper at 6:30 P.M.

Those who were particularly maladjusted and could cause trouble during meals ate in their cells as did those who were too “mentally disturbed” and therefore might create disorder. Each cell had a small opening in the door through which food could be passed, but “without either knife or even a fork,” and the Brothers themselves brought the food.

The others in detention took their meals in the dining room designated for them. The benches were of one piece, solidly built into the tables, with crossbars and footing along the floor, and cupboards and bureaus were provided to store napkins. The tableware included metal and crockery pots, crockery plates, metal spoons, iron forks, and knives with blunt points that could not wound. De La Salle insisted that tablecloths and napkins be used (CL 19: 85).

Silence was imposed in the dining room, with prayers before and after the meal, and reading during the meal itself. De La Salle put an emphasis on politeness, and the regulations for the house of detention prescribed that the inmates take their meals according to the practices of people of “good breeding.” One regulation, for example, stated that those who lack something were to ask for it in a low voice and in few words, “from the one in charge of the dining room or those who are serving, and they will not be troublesome” (ADSM).

According to Brother Emery, inmates were given fixed portions from the same dishes from which the Brothers were served. At breakfast, they were given bread and the drink of the country, a small amount of cider. At dinner they received soup, a portion of meat, and a dessert; each received a beverage and as much bread as desired.

This description would be incomplete if there were no mention of certain problems connected with the food; such problems were not lacking at Saint Yon. From the evidence available, there is no question but that the inmate Desurmont was the most severe in his criticism. Three pages of his memoirs tell of the “awful” food and of the “excessive” profit that the Brothers made on those in detention.

The state minister, Saint Florentin, sent the following letter, dated May 30, 1764, to the general procurator of the Rouen parliament:

There is a complaint that the Brothers of Saint Yon feed their boarders poorly while requiring more than the customary 400 livres. I beg you to be good enough to look into the way in which the prisoners are fed. If, in fact, that is poorly done, please notify these Brothers to see to it that the legitimate causes for complaint in this matter be corrected.

The general procurator answered:

I am informed that the boarders in this house are getting adequate and appropriate nourishment, and I have been told by a person who

was released a short time ago that the food is good and that there is no cause for complaining. The superior of the house, whom I asked, gave me the details of what is provided for the meals of the boarders. (ADSM)

Brother Emery tells us that the first president of the Rouen parliament would come “from time to time” to visit, and when the boarders were in the dining room, he could see how they were served, but Desurmont complained that when a distinguished person visited Saint Yon, “the Brothers served twice as much, but afterwards, everything returned to the old routine.”

On April 11, 1782, the Brother Prefect announced that the house would not reimburse those in detention for any food or drink which they would not accept, “since these were given to them for their nourishment.” No doubt this was intended to put a stop to what seems to have become a traffic in food, but it is clear that some inmates were still able to supplement the menu. Desurmont bought a chicken for himself from time to time, and contemporary records deplored the fact that some inmates were able to run parties in their cells, using resources procured by means “which should have been condemned rather than approved.”

Judging by documented records, it does appear that inmates were receiving adequate nourishment. A sample menu included the following:

- ♦ Sunday Dinner: a portion of veal with half a pound of bouilli (a kind of bread pudding made by boiling cereal in milk) and dessert
- ♦ Sunday Supper: roast veal, mutton, or fowl (according to the season), about half a pound, and dessert
- ♦ Monday Dinner: veal liver cooked in lard; the rest as on Sunday
- ♦ Monday Supper: about half a pound of roast veal or an appropriate portion of stew, and dessert
- ♦ Tuesday Dinner: a piece of veal bouilli or of grilled mutton, some beef, and dessert as usual
- ♦ Tuesday Supper: veal with peas or mutton and beans (according to the season)
- ♦ Wednesday Dinner: veal tripe and hocks, beef and dessert
- ♦ Wednesday Supper: beef casserole and dessert
- ♦ Thursday Dinner: ham or salted pork, beef and dessert
- ♦ Thursday Supper: roast meat and dessert
- ♦ Friday Dinner: codfish or some other fish, and dessert
- ♦ Friday Supper: Eggs or fish, and dessert
- ♦ Saturday Dinner: a serving of a vegetable and an egg
- ♦ Saturday Supper: fish or eggs, and dessert

Dessert was served at every meal except three times a week, when a salad was served instead (ADSM).

The least that can be said is that the menu gives the impression that the inmates were well fed. But for someone who was accustomed to expensive meals, as was Desurmont, it was a matter of only “very dry bread; meat from very tough cows; meat from a sick calf; waste meat bought on sale; old eggs; and a dessert consisting of six or eight nuts or two small sour apples.” All of this is reminiscent of the Brothers’ frugal menu that the then Canon De La Salle, in the early days of the Institute, was unable to stomach (CL 4: 71).

The high quality of the organization of the house of detention provided an important framework for the efforts of the Brothers in dealing with the troubled youths who were sent to them. But the true rehabilitation of these unfortunate youths was effected through the more individualized elements of the program, derived from the early ideas of De La Salle.

## The House of Detention: Rehabilitation

The program which the Brothers at Saint Yon developed for helping the maladjusted and disturbed youths, and later the adults who were committed to the house of detention, was the outgrowth of the basic policy developed by De La Salle refined through years of experience, and was in use in similar institutions in which the Brothers worked. The program already described was based on the conviction that the environment of the well-organized school, staffed by dedicated and competent teachers, with well-defined and appropriate discipline and an effective program, provided the rehabilitative environment for the maladjusted student.

### Personal Concern

Every aspect of the program in the house of detention was marked by the personal concern of the Brothers for each inmate. This concern began as soon as a committed youth entered Saint Yon.

Although initially confined to a cell if he was violent or abusive, a newcomer was not left entirely to himself, nor did the Brothers sit idly by waiting until isolation would bring about a change of heart. The Brothers tried to approach new inmates during the quarantine and influence them as much as possible. A number of stories exist about the beneficial effects of this early association with a Brother, and three are of special interest. Two refer to Saint Yon, the first concerning what De La Salle himself did for the inmates; the second recounting an incident in which Brother Irénée was involved. A third story, dated 1778, recounts an incident that took place at Maréville, an institution similar to the house of detention at Saint Yon.

The first of these accounts is told at length by Blain:

De La Salle's zeal led him to be attentive to any opportunity to show kindness toward the senior (inmates) and junior (regular school) boarders who are in this house under the direction of the Brothers. The former received frequent visits from him. They have a great need for this, since, locked up by their parents or by the order of the court because of their delinquency, they are doing involuntary penance, which ordinarily does not serve either for the amendment of their lives or the expiation of their sins. These young men, blinded by their

passions and hardened by their vices, do not allow themselves to be easily touched. . . . Or, if they listen and behave in a docile manner and seem open to good influence, it is only through trickery and deceit for the purpose of making use of a fake conversion in order to be discharged.

It is easy to understand that these rogues are not in an attitude to hear anybody talk about God, or penance, and that men of ordinary virtue, after much exhortation and reasoning, leave them just as they found them. To help such sinful persons, men of eminent grace and superior virtue are needed. . . . It was not very long before De La Salle began to visit these prisoners, and a true and solid conversion was the sign and result. He first set out to gain their trust, and then they confided the care of their consciences to him.

In the hands of a physician so kind and so skillful, the evils of the most hopeless among them were cured, and intense and virtually incurable wounds were healed. . . . Their conversion procured their discharge. Some left Saint Yon only to enter the cloister. Others, returning to the world, showed by a respectable and orderly way of life that they had had the good fortune in prison to meet a saint and, through him, to find the grace of conversion. (CL 8: 164–165)

The second incident is recorded by the biographer of Brother Irénée. Brother Irénée was continually concerned about the inmates of the house of detention, and he would visit a sick youth frequently to encourage him in his suffering and to provide for all his needs. On one occasion, a certain inmate who was feeling particularly bad begged Brother Irénée not to leave him. Brother stayed with him until midnight, speaking all the while about the goodness of God, and when he noticed how cold the patient was, he arranged for a charcoal heater to be brought to the cell. Either out of mortification or lack of attention, Brother Irénée made no complaint and endured the excessive heat and the noxious fumes for several hours. The damage done to his own health proved fatal.

The third testimony to this solicitude for the inmates comes from Brother Solomon regarding Brother Liboire at Maréville:

Brother Liboire . . . once told me that he spoke many times with a particular young man to comfort him, teach him, and encourage him to adopt a Christian attitude. The Brother spared no efforts to succeed in this attempt, reading to him from good books, encouraging him, sometimes at the expense of necessary sleep, with such energy and emotion that the young man was brought to tears. . . . The Brother tried every means available under the circumstances. . . . Perhaps less firmness on the part of his family would have made the inmate more

docile, and a little more attention on their part to provide some comforts for his narrow cell might have prevented the poor inmate from experiencing the sad and gloomy depression that obsessed him. (AMG)

These three examples, certainly not exceptional, are needed to balance references to relationships between the Brothers and the inmates that were altogether different. Brother Memin, a prefect of the house of detention, was, for example, reprimanded for having on occasion spent part of the night eating and drinking with the inmates and for having even gone out at night with some of them. The source of this scandalous information adds the detail that “no one knows when they got back” (ADSM).

Personal contacts with the inmates, however, were not limited to the Brothers. Priests from outside were also able to meet with the inmates, and it is clear that the judicial authorities had many contacts with the inmates during the final 20 years of the *ancien régime*.

## Appeal and Review

Official correspondence concerning the inmates of the house of detention during this time covered a surprising range: requests from the authorities for information, reports given by the Brothers, reports of visits made to the inmates by the magistrates, petitions addressed by the inmates to the authorities, orders given to the Brothers by the magistrates and others, documents and records which are all quite impersonal and formal (Rigault II: 326).

However, the report dated April 12, 1775, concerning the visit of a magistrate to Saint Yon, is an eloquent proof of the personal dimension that could be brought to some of these visits. This report included the names of no less than 25 persons who were petitioning favors, 23 of whom were given serious consideration. Some details follow:

- ♦ Twelve inmates were petitioning to have the necessary steps taken to obtain their discharge. These petitions are sometimes supplemented by additional notes, probably requested from the Brothers by the magistrate, such as, “They are quite satisfied with him”; “They are very pleased with him”; “Well behaved.” In the margin of the text of each petition the date can be read when the petition was answered; for example: “Halley Damfreville asks for his discharge. They are very pleased with him. Write, therefore, to his mother, Madame Damfreville. Reply sent in writing, June 9, 1775.”
- ♦ Four inmates were petitioning freedom within the house. It was given to two of them.
- ♦ Three inmates were petitioning that their letters addressed to an official be mailed without being opened. The text adds: “The Brothers were ordered to allow this.”

- ♦ Two inmates were presenting memoranda (written statements of personal observations about life at Saint Yon). These reports were received.
- ♦ One inmate asked for a meeting with his wife. Permission was granted.
- ♦ One inmate asked to meet with Reverend (name illegible) as director of his conscience. The text adds: "The director of the house of detention is asked to gather whatever information is needed to determine if he is available" (ADSM).

### **Religious Program**

Once the committed youth had been acclimated to the house and had been helped to accept his situation, he was involved in a series of programs which formed the basis of the special education for the students at Saint Yon. Religious education in the form of instruction, prayer, and the liturgy of the Church was primary among these.

Brother Emery reports that a new inmate, while still initially in his cell, was visited by Brothers who tried to help him think about changing his ways. He was taught the prayers of the Brothers' community, and when he gave evidence of good will and promised to abide by the regulations, he was allowed to join with the others in the daily activities.

Religious activity was scheduled throughout the day. Morning prayer, recited in the balcony of the large chapel, was followed by Mass, attended by those inmates who were willing to come and who agreed to behave "with all the decorum and devotion that the Sacrifice of the Mass and the holiness of the place required."

After breakfast the inmates recited the litany of the Divine Child and three decades of the rosary with the Brothers' community. Later in the morning they attended the examination of conscience and the prayers before dinner. In the dining room of the inmates, public reading took place as in the Brothers' community, as well as prayers before and after the meal. After a little relaxation, the inmates recited the litany of Saint Joseph and three decades of the rosary with the Brothers. At 5:30 P.M., "they gathered in a classroom for a public reading from a good book, even occasionally for a sermon or an edifying story," until 6:30 P.M. At 8:00 P.M., the inmates attended the community prayer of the Brothers, which was followed by the reading of one of the meditations written by a Father Croizel. The Brothers went for walks with the inmates, they shared the same food at table, and they had cells that were furnished as poorly as those of the inmates.

To encourage the inmates to participate in church services, the Brothers in 1737 edited a collection of hymns for Masses and benediction "to be sung at Saint Yon by the Inmates." The official imprimatur on

the book states: "These texts are all borrowed from the Roman Liturgy and Holy Scripture and are chosen with taste and good judgment; there is nothing objectionable in this book intended for regular use on solemn feasts" (AMG).

Among the inmates, there were some who occasionally received Communion. For this purpose, Communion was brought to their balcony in the chapel. They also went to confession without leaving the house, for the confessional was located in the sacristy of the house chapel (ADSM).

On the mornings of Sundays and feasts, the inmates were gathered at 10:45 A.M. in the assembly room in order to make a spiritual reading in common until 11:30 A.M., and in the afternoon they attended Vespers.

There would, of course, be criticism by the inmates and others of this extensive schedule of religious practice. To some extent criticism may have been merited. A contemporary journal published one such criticism in 1744, probably written by the Abbé De Guisainville, who had been incarcerated in Saint Yon by his bishop because of his Jansenistic ideas. Among other things, the Abbé accused the Brothers of knowing neither the nature of Christian justice nor the elements of conversion and the tests necessary to verify it. According to him, the place itself offered the inmates no choice except hopelessness or hypocrisy: "It follows that persons steeped in vice, far from finding a cure for their ills in the sacraments of the Church, only become more obstinate. They find in the means of salvation, which they abuse, only a seal for their hardness of heart."

De Guisainville spoke as a Jansenistic theologian and condemned the Brothers for being too faithful to traditional doctrines. The Brothers were, in fact, simply avoiding all theological disputation, in accord with De La Salle's directives. It was true, however, that the privileges given to those who behaved well in a prison situation led some inmates to hypocrisy. Blain observed that some of the inmates "behave in a docile manner and seem open to good influence . . . through trickery and deceit, for the purpose of making use of a fake conversion in order to be discharged." One of the complaints against the members of the sodality of the Virgin Mary was that a member enrolled not so much from a religious motive, but rather to get certain material advantages (Rigault: 402-407).

### **The Sodality of the Blessed Virgin**

Brother Irénée organized at Saint Yon in both the house of correction and the house of detention a sodality dedicated to the Virgin Mary, for which he obtained papal approval. The members of this association "made a vow to defend the glorious privilege of the Immaculate Conception and to recite certain prescribed prayers." The sodality was made up of a president, two aides, and the members themselves. When a new member was

admitted, he received a diploma on parchment, signed by the president, the secretary, and the Brother Director of the house. He was also promised prayers after his death if his relatives would send the diploma back to the house. In that event the document was read in public, the office of the dead was chanted, and a Mass was offered for the repose of the soul of the deceased (AMG).

The members of the sodality prepared for the feast of the Immaculate Conception by a retreat of eight days. On the day of the feast, they all renewed the promises they had made on their entrance into the sodality, knelt as they read the act of consecration to the Virgin Mary, and then went to embrace the Brother Director, the president, and his aides. The sodality had a chapel, which members maintained and decorated at their own expense, and when the Archbishop of Rouen made a visit, in May 1767, he found everything in the chapel in good and proper order, with all that was necessary “for the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries” (ADSM).

Records of Saint Yon show that the sodality was governed entirely by its own members and that it held its meetings weekly, on Saturday afternoons, often for several hours. At its height the sodality apparently had a treasury of about 2,000 livres. But the affluence and independence of sodality members eventually led to abuses, and an investigation was conducted in May 1785 by Brother Agathon, Superior General. Many abuses were cited, some in areas of management, others more serious.

The investigators found, for example, that the officers of the sodality refused to produce a copy of their regulations and to respond to charges that they had made unauthorized changes in the original structure of the organization and even in its original purpose. Meetings, it was alleged, were held not in the places provided but in cells or out-of-the-way areas, and they were often characterized by programs more in keeping with a social club than with an association for prayer. The methods of raising and dispensing funds also came under criticism, particularly since no accounting was available.

But charges even more serious were listed in the report:

These inmates would bring to their cells the young students [of the boarding school], children of the choir, under the pretext of giving them candy. More than likely they were also able to give and receive letters, knives, files, and to make indecent proposals. . . .

Some people from outside, preachers, choirmasters, or celebrants for the High Mass, have been in the cells, sharing a glass of wine. These people have also been asked to do errands and to bring or deliver written messages.

Even if no member of the sodality set the chapel on fire, the typical lack of decency, the impiety, and the blasphemy would be enough

to give the authorities reason to forbid the celebration of the sacred mysteries.

It has been objected that some of the abuses could be corrected without the members having to give up all their activities, but experience proves only too well that this would not work, since warnings repeated time and again and all the prudent care of the superiors in this matter have not been able to prevent the abuses from recurring. (AMG)

The accretion of privilege and the lack of accountability, it was decided, gave rise to envy, complaints, criticism, and even ridicule of otherwise potentially valuable sodality activities and of the more conventional religious programs. As a consequence, Brother Agathon ordered the sodality discontinued.

But if one prescind from the admittedly unfortunate deterioration of the sodality and sees it in the context of the total operation of Saint Yon and in the milieu of eighteenth-century France, one recognizes that this religious association had a real value.

The very existence of such a sodality inside an eighteenth-century house of detention was a major innovation. It gave a balance to the discipline of the house and mitigated the rigidity of the regulations. In its pristine state, it was healthy and good for the inmates. Although this association had primarily a religious purpose, it also exercised a therapeutic function. Its members had some autonomy and could make use of a separate place where they could come together to pray, to sing, to discuss, and even to eat and drink. All this had the effect of preparing them for normal social living.

The existence of the sodality also helps to broaden our understanding of the attitude that the Brothers had toward the inmates. It is at least an indication of the trust the Brothers had in the inmates, and it also testifies to the patience of the Brothers, all the more so since abuses recurred from time to time during the half century of the sodality's existence.

### **Academic Programs**

From the very inception of the house of detention, it seems to have been understood that schooling would be fundamental to the rehabilitation provided, and it was through participation in the programs of the regular boarding school that the academic dimension was made available to the inmates.

In addition to the traditional subjects, the inmates could take a course in English, and courses in drawing, dance, violin, or the clarinet were also available to those who wished to develop their creative and artistic talents. The inmate Duseugray took lessons in drawing, violin, and the clarinet;

Thieubert, another inmate, took lessons in English, dance, and drawing; and Bourgeois, also in the house of detention, took courses in English, drawing, the clarinet, and dance. In this way, the Brothers provided many cultural activities for the inmates of the house of detention.

These opportunities were offered only to those who behaved well: for example, inmate D'Orillac, as punishment for violation of rules, was deprived of his violin, which was his "enjoyment and his consolation."

A contemporary periodical observed that inmates under the order of the royal court were provided with teachers of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and Brother Emery elaborated on this information, saying that they could also take advanced courses in writing, spelling, and accounting. In addition, the program of the house of detention stipulated that if any of the inmates wanted to learn the elements of geometry, design, and civil and military architecture, a schedule should be made for them to profit from the lessons given by the teachers of the regular boarders, provided their behavior merited this privilege.

In this connection it is interesting to learn that when Brother Solomon was stationed at the house of detention in Maréville, he was directed by the superiors to become a student of one of the inmates, who was a very good mathematician, in order to develop his own competence in geometry and algebra. This arrangement reflects the concern of the Brothers for the inmates they sought to help (CL 8: 193).

According to Blain, the technical teaching given to some of the inmates was extended to allow them to work professionally in larger shops built for this purpose. Though documentation on this subject is missing, the ground plan of Saint Yon locates the shops for various trades. One contemporary, describing the facility at Maréville, which was similar to that of Saint Yon, said that the noise and activity made one believe he was at a blacksmith's forge or in a large factory, "where skillful workers are being trained for manufacturing in iron, for making furniture, and for sculpture." Since this description could refer only to the program of the inmates, it seems to confirm a tradition that technical training was an element in the special education given by the Brothers (CL 8: 193).

## Daily Activities

At the city's *Tour-des-Insensés* inmates were left to themselves, but this was not the case in the house of detention at Saint Yon. A report on Saint Yon in 1744 stresses how advantageous it was that the inmates "are not at all left to themselves to do as they please, but rather are kept occupied." Brother Solenne explains the reason:

I have always held that the best way to bring a young man back to virtue in a house of detention or to prevent his being completely

corrupted, is to keep him busy. It is for this purpose that in our unit one activity follows another and little time is left for inmates to do as they please. (ADSM)

We have already seen that besides religious instruction, De La Salle had a very broad and practical goal for children in the schools of the Brothers. He believed that the students should be prepared not only with basic skills needed to earn a simple living, but also that they should, at the same time, obtain both the skills and the motivation to improve themselves. The Christian Academy he established in Paris as a Sunday school for young workmen is a good example. This same concept is reflected in records of the house of detention at Saint Yon.

Some of the inmates were allowed to work in their cells. Rigault presumes that they were involved with writing or manual work. We do know that one activity they did engage in was the writing of letters, memoirs, and reports. Another work is referred to by Brother Solomon, who wrote that some of the inmates at Maréville were talented calligraphers, and kept busy copying books of plainchant and manuscripts. They evidently did their work with skill and elegance, since some of their books were valued at more than 1,600 francs.

It is probable that the inmates of Saint Yon did similar work. Brother Alberic, teacher of mathematics at Saint Yon, stated in the preface of his arithmetic textbook that he had published the text “to spare the young men the trouble of writing notebooks, which are rarely exact, and which deprive them of time which they could better use learning other subjects or improving their knowledge of mathematics” (AMG).

Several publications of the Institute of the Brothers cite a tradition that Saint Yon inmates participated in the construction of the chapel, the shops, and other buildings. Unfortunately, there is no other documentation to prove this except an ambiguous statement by Blain, who witnessed the construction. He said the building was as large as a church, and that the Brothers had “secured the architect and some of the workers from the people in the house.” Even if Blain was referring primarily to the Brothers themselves, a broader interpretation including inmates cannot be ruled out (CL 8: 193).

It is clear that the combination of academic work and worthwhile activities at Saint Yon constituted a massive program of adult rehabilitation which affirms the real concern of the Brothers for those committed to their care in the house of detention.

### **Leisure and Recreation**

Though we do not have precise documentation to support a belief that inmates in Saint Yon engaged in gardening, evidence is not entirely

lacking. A document of 1736 mentioned that the vegetables raised on the property not only supplied the needs of the house, already quite large, but also allowed for marketing in the city. Regulations in the house of Rossignoleris, another institution similar to Saint Yon, warned the Brothers convalescing or resting there against staring at the inmates at work in the garden or talking to them. Lucard mentions that inmates at Saint Yon followed courses in botany and that a part of the larger garden there was reserved for their studies. A garden program is listed in a contemporary document of Saint Yon, and the ground plan shows two gardens, the larger of which was tended by inmates.

We have noted that the inmates of the house of detention were allowed activities similar to those available to the regular boarders. For example, they were allowed to keep flowers on the windowsill and have caged birds. But anyone who wanted these privileges had to accept responsibilities. The Brother Prefect insisted that those who kept the flowers also keep receptacles in place to protect sills and walls from dripping water, and those who had birds were required to keep them caged and the cell clean. However, if the inmate owned all the furniture in his cell, he could release the bird, though he was not excused from keeping his cell in satisfactory condition.

At Saint Yon the vocational activities as well as the technical or horticultural work contributed to the personal rehabilitation of the inmates. In this the Brothers applied what later came to be called "work therapy." At the same time they did not neglect the intellectual work and the leisure so essential to the development of the human spirit.

There was a library for the use of the inmates. The inventory of 1791 listed 1,671 books of all kinds: 480 volumes of periodicals, such as the *Année littéraire*, *Mercur de France*, *Journal encyclopédique*; 110 volumes of *Histoire universelle*; 92 volumes of *Causes célèbres*; 30 volumes of the Old and New Testament; 28 volumes of *Des voyageurs français*; 27 volumes of *Hommes illustres de France*. The library fee was 24 livres per year, and the number of subscribers to the library was more than 50.

The regulations of the house of detention allowed the inmates to have materials for writing letters or for other projects, but on condition that an exact account be kept of everything. Only letters addressed to the president of the parliament of Normandy or to ministers of the governments were free from censorship. This freedom probably has provided us with the report several pages long, written to the authorities in 1777 by Desurmont, which was so severely critical of the house of detention at Saint Yon.

The Saint Yon program provided time for activities more purely recreational than letter writing. Singing had its place at Saint Yon, and we have seen that De La Salle regarded singing as a simple and a very effective way to build a spirit that was both pleasant and therapeutic.

There is some evidence that the inmates practiced plainchant and learned polyphony; the house of detention at Maréville had something of a reputation for the quality of its choir.

For recreation De La Salle approved two kinds of games, those that exercised the body, such as tennis, bowling, ninepins, and badminton, and those that involved the mind, such as chess and checkers, as well as some card games, such as piquet, which were games of skill.

For De La Salle the word *recreation* did not mean merely games and play, but also the pleasant conversation which could take place indoors or on a walk. Though the idea was not, of course, original with him, he considered conversation important in the life of the cultured gentleman, but not without its dangers. In *Les Règles de la Bienséance et de la Civilité chrétienne*, his book on politeness, which served also as a school reader, De La Salle declared that it was the proper part of good behavior to converse after meals with those with whom one had eaten; he considered it rude to rush from the table as soon as one finished. De La Salle did not object to telling stories, even such as would amuse the company, but he warned against bad taste, vulgarity, and gossip (CL 19: 149).

It is not surprising to find that these same ideas, originally proposed to the Brothers, the teachers, and the students of the boarding school, appear in the regulations of the house of detention at Saint Yon. Brother Emery lists some directives:

- ♦ After dinner, everyone will go to the courtyard or the room for recreation, depending on the weather, except those who are obliged to return to their cells.
- ♦ In the recreation periods, there will be groups (of 10 to 14), each under the charge of one or two Brothers.
- ♦ Conversations between two individuals will be avoided, as well as whispering to one another, or separating from the group, or going to one side, or being always with the same persons.
- ♦ They will always converse with much courtesy and will avoid everything that might give offense. They will leave at peace those who are feeble-minded and never make fun of the weakness of another person.

De La Salle understood the value of leisure time activity. On working days, the inmates had two recreation periods, and on Sundays and feasts, three. Weather permitting, recreation was taken outside. A ground plan of Saint Yon (see p. 94) shows a play field (6) of about 1,800 square yards, formed by buildings 4, 5, and 7. These buildings also included assembly and recreation halls.

An explanatory document of the time, which accompanies the ground plan of Saint Yon, indicates that many had “full liberty to walk about

in the house.” Desurmont confirmed this in his remarks about those inmates who over a period of more than 50 years had “enjoyed the full freedom of the house.”

The Brothers, in the tradition of De La Salle, saw that walks in the country were a worthwhile activity that would contribute to health and dispose the mind for intellectual work. Brother Emery, writing of the regular boarders, mentioned that they frequently took walks through the region around the city. Desurmont stated that three times a week the inmates had the opportunity to go with the Brothers on walks of five miles or more in the countryside around Rouen. (But Desurmont was compelled to add that “more recently” the Brothers had restricted the practice because some of the inmates took advantage of the chance to run away.)

For the inmates of the house of detention, these activities could have a healing effect. The cultivation of flowers, the practice of singing, the games, the periods of recreation, the walks, and the various programs in arts and crafts had a positive influence on the minds and hearts of young and old alike. Such activities restored balance to those disturbed by psychological pressures and fostered social behavior in those who had become frustrated and withdrawn. De La Salle and his Brothers were the first schoolmen in Rouen to provide such leisure time activities for inmates in detention (CL 19: 132–148 *passim*).

## **Discipline**

Vigilance played a very important role in De La Salle’s concept of education. It is not surprising, then, that supervision was rather strict at the house of detention. A detailed insight into the daily responsibilities of the supervisors is gained from some directives listed by Brother Emery and from the regulations of the house.

During morning prayer for the inmates, Brother Emery’s account tells us, several Brothers were present in the gallery of the chapel. All the doors were locked when the inmates went from the chapel to the dining room. All the knives were collected before anyone got up from the table. In class, a Brother was responsible for sharpening the pens, since no one was allowed to have a knife. While the teacher was teaching, another was supervising “so that [the inmates] might not pass anything from one to another, and that they not do any copying.” The regulations prescribed that a Brother was to shave the inmates and that he do this publicly in one of the classrooms. A Brother was always present during recreation, “to listen to what was being said,” and cells were searched frequently. After evening prayer those held under royal decree were

locked up for the night, and the building supervised till after midnight, while another Brother, with two large dogs, patrolled the yards and gardens.

When one of the inmates was brought to meet a visitor in the parlor (which was thoroughly secured), a Brother would always be present, either with the inmate or on the other side of the grill, with those who came to make the visit.

All the letters written by the inmates were read by the prefect of the unit. However, inmates could write to the members of the parliament and receive answers without having the Brother Prefect read them. The Brothers always feared that correspondence among the inmates themselves or with outsiders would in some way stir up a rebellion or cause harm to the institution. For this reason they had a rule that the inmates “would not have in their cells any paper, pen or ink without express permission, and when they were given anything for a letter or something else, they would make an exact account of everything.”

Other interesting regulations in force at the Saint Yon house of detention include the following:

- ♦ No inmate will enter the cell of another without permission, especially in his absence. Each will take care of his own linen and clothing, and no one is permitted to change anything, nor lend, give, sell, or exchange anything.
- ♦ These inmates will not do any talking back and forth out of the windows, nor between the doors or partitions. They will also avoid making any noise by shouting or in any other way.
- ♦ When they are being brought from one place to another, they will always proceed in single file and in silence.

Without a note from the Brother Director of the house, the Brother Porter of the house of detention was not to let anyone enter except the Brothers who worked there, the Sub-Director, the Director of novices, the Procurator, and the Brother Prefect of the unit. As a precaution, the Brother Porter was instructed to keep his key in a secret place. The exits of the unit were closed by a double set of doors which only the Brother Porter could open. A small opening enabled him to see who was on the other side. These regulations are not completely clear, since the buildings of the unit, according to the ground plan, were not all within one enclosure, but quite separated.

The regulations of the Brother Infirmarian also indicate that much attention was given to vigilance over visits to the sick in detention. Some of these regulations imply rather unfortunate previous experiences.

- ♦ The Brother Infirmarian will always be very sure to keep the door open when he is alone in the cell and will give the key one turn so as not to be locked in himself.

- ♦ He will not leave the keys in the lock or lend them to inmates. He will lock the doors of the inmates just as he found them, turning the key twice and fixing the two hooks as they were before.

The infirmarian was to communicate with the more difficult inmates only through the small opening in the door, through which food was served also, and if he had to open the door, he was to do so only when he had someone with him.

These regulations may permit the inference that the Brothers had very little trust in the inmates and that vigilance and discipline were meticulous. In fact, however, the attitude of the Brothers was only realistic. They had learned their lesson from various rebellions by the inmates, which will be described in the following section. One thing is certain: the discipline became more strict after these rebellions.

The 50 years of the house of detention show a cycle of freedom and abuse. Recurring efforts on the part of the Brothers and the administration to cultivate a realistic spirit of trust and independence on the part of the inmates were succeeded by reports of abuses and complaints over restrictions. Here are several accounts taken from correspondence of Brothers stationed at Saint Yon at one time or another (ADSM).

- ♦ During the time Brother Pontian was prefect, 1778-1782, a small business enterprise began, with inmates selling some of their small belongings to one another to procure some drinks or sweets. . . . I spoke about this several times with Brother Solenne in order to correct these abuses, but as he was still new in the position, he preferred to go very gently in dealing with the inmates.
- ♦ All the rebellions that happened in our house came about because the inmates had too much freedom to communicate their plans to one another, doing so easily during their recreation.
- ♦ Since I have been at the house of detention, I have often complained about the ease with which the inmates were given paper in their cells. This became a source of problems often requiring punishment which, though deserved, always created malcontents. My predecessors had tried without success to bring this under control.

It is not surprising, then, that the letters and reports addressed by the inmates to the general procurator expressed their discontent, either toward those responsible for their confinement or toward the Brothers. Brother Solenne thought that a great deal was questionable in the complaints “of all these gentlemen, who study every possible way to get back at those who keep them locked up. . . . When they do not try to get back at their relatives, they take it out on those who are responsible for detaining them, threatening or complaining about pretended injustices which they imagine have been committed against them” (ADSM).

The Brothers, nevertheless, could not afford to reduce the vigilance

needed to maintain order. Brother Aphrodise, with 16 years of experience at Saint Yon, observed that gatherings of inmates held too frequently were sure sources of rebellion. He insisted that the rebellions of 1766 and 1773, as well as the escape of 1769, originated with groups that had been drinking more than was suspected. The same Brother requested a M. Belbeuf to reconsider his decision to increase the number of recreation periods for the inmates, because this gave them too much freedom to plot among themselves. Another complaint came from the Brothers in charge of the recreation periods, who stated that that was their most difficult work, especially on Sundays and feasts, when they were obliged to be on that duty for five hours in addition to the time for chapel service (ADSM).

### **Rebellion by the Inmates of the House of Detention**

Complaints, disorder, and even rebellion continued off and on through the eighteenth century, influenced no doubt by the sympathy that neighbors of the Manor of Saint Yon exhibited for the younger boys committed to the place, and, more important, by the greater demands made upon the staff by the increased number of adult inmates and the mentally ill.

Two cases illustrating the problem of rebellion are described at length in the Rouen archives.

In August, 1751, Johanne, one of the inmates, climbed over the wall of the garden and fled. Brothers Leonard and Romain noticed the escape, chased after the inmate, and eventually caught him. Johanne agreed to return with them to Saint Yon, but when he and the Brothers got to the town square, he tried to run away again and had to be held by force. A woman by the name of Picarde and a man named Chapelle called on several neighbors to help the inmate. Very quickly, according to eyewitnesses, more than 200 people surrounded the two Brothers and their prisoner. Stones were thrown and one of the Brothers was slightly wounded on the leg. Taking advantage of the turmoil and with the help of friends, Johanne disappeared into the crowd.

Brother Claude, at that time the superior at Saint Yon, wrote at once to the lieutenant general of the area, informing him of what had happened and demanding immediate justice. The court action that followed ended with Chapelle and his principal accomplices being heavily fined. The royal procurator and the lieutenant general published a list of prohibitions against involvement by outsiders in any aspect of the Saint Yon operation.

In 1766 a serious rebellion of the inmates broke out as a result of the imprudent actions of Brother Memin, prefect of the house of detention. A long letter from Brother Claude, then Superior General, to M. De La Michaudiere, the superintendent, gives the details. Brother Memin was

a rather peculiar man, hard on some inmates, very easy on others. In the letter, Brother Superior accused him of being an accomplice in an escape, receiving gifts of money, drinking in taverns with some of the inmates, boasting of protection in high places, and refusing to obey the orders of his superiors, thus alienating himself from the Brothers at Saint Yon.

On December 5, 1766, the inmates learned that a M. Hue de Miromesnil had been appointed to inspect the establishment. Those who had grievances against Brother Memin, suspecting that he had denounced them to the first president, became furious and demanded that he be dismissed. When the inmates learned that Brother Memin had disappeared, they attacked the other Brothers, seized their keys, and opened the doors. Twenty-eight of them fled. The military were called in by order of M. De Cambon, major general of the area. De Miromesnil himself arrived at 11:00 P.M. and was able to prevail on the majority of the inmates to return to their cells. But the disorder broke out again on the next morning, and the house was then occupied by the military for 48 hours.

To complete this account, here is the version which Brother Memin himself gives in a communication to the superintendent, M. De La Michaudiere, dated shortly after the incident of December 9. It seems to demonstrate Brother Memin's ability to fit the narrative to his own purpose.

As soon as the uprising occurred last evening, started by several of the inmates in my charge, I immediately sent word to your residence. This uprising would not have occurred at all if my authority over the inmates had not been taken away from me several days earlier. For some time now there has been friction here between me and my confreres. I am enclosing a list of all our inmates, and those marked with a cross are the runaways. (ADSM)

The rebellion was an eye-opener for some of the magistrates who had been protecting Brother Memin, and made it possible for the superiors of Saint Yon to remove him. He was later sent as an inmate himself to a house of detention which the Brothers staffed at Bicêtre in Paris.

On July 28, 1774, there was another rebellion similar to the one in 1766. The exact causes are not known, but the archives give details of what each inmate who took part in it had done:

Blondé de Messémé, called Saint Hubert (the inmate's assumed name used in the house of detention), Berthault, priest, called Saint Cyr, and the Abbé De Maille, called Saint Clément, are the main instigators of the uprising, which they plotted secretly and then led openly by direction and action.

The first of these men stayed to guard the doors, keeping the Brothers from leaving, as well as those inmates who wanted only to

return to their cells. The other two went out to raise support. They expected that other inmates would quickly join them, and that the mentally deficient would follow, as they always did.

Le Roy, called Saint Paul, acted as spokesman. He pounded the table and demanded the keys to open the cells of those who had been locked up as a punishment and because of their dangerous disposition. He and De La Leu, called Saint Luke, who had beaten a Brother with his fists and with an andiron, supported by the other three, threatened the Brothers, and obstinately refused to listen to reason.

Despierres, called Saint Vincent, started a fire in a straw mattress, which almost completely burned. He had an iron bar to beat off any one who tried to stop him. (ADSM)

As the outbreak grew, inmates started fires in several places. Benches were pulled from walls and floor, doors were smashed, and mattresses were carried to a central place for a fire, or set burning in several cells. Cupboards were smashed; papers, ink, and books were strewn about. School texts were torn up for the fires. Inmates who wanted no part in the revolt were beaten or locked up in some of the cells, and the entire section was turned into a fort, with access and egress barred. Leaders refused to talk with the Brothers, demanded only release, and threatened to assassinate the Brothers and those inmates who would not join with them.

When it was obvious that the riot was out of control, the Brothers sent to the city magistrates for help, and eventually a detachment from the Dauphin's regiment arrived and quickly brought the situation under control. Fires were extinguished, damage cleaned up, and the inmates returned to their cells.

M. Miromesnil, the superintendent, took charge, remanded the three ringleaders to solitary confinement, and departed, leaving a guard of eight soldiers. His report to M. Bertin, the state's minister, declared that all was quiet by 3:00 A.M., but in fact several inmates had barricaded themselves in one section, and they and others shouted and made disturbances all through the early morning hours.

Some three weeks later, Brother Josaphat, Prefect of the house, wrote to the superintendent:

We continue to hold in the lockup the leaders of the rebellion. This is the only effective way to control and deal with them. The spirit of revolt is so deep in them that we believe there would be a clear danger in placing them with the other inmates. We continue to serve their needs and carefully provide for them where they are and in a way that they cannot complain, at least with justice. (ADSM)

Finally, on August 24, the Brothers wrote to the superintendent, asking for the transfer of six inmates to a prison.

In his report on the situation, the grand vicar of Rouen, Marescot, stated that the Brothers were very much in need of being taught and directed, that they did not understand their responsibilities very well, and that they had so little knowledge of the proper way to deal with the inmates that it was not at all surprising that rebellions took place in their house at Saint Yon. In the end, however, the superintendent approved the transfer of the rebellious inmates and kept the Brothers in charge (AMG).

Determined though the Brothers were to carry on the work that De La Salle had begun at Saint Yon, and ready though they were to learn from experience, the rebellion and particularly the assessment of the grand vicar did illuminate the limitations of their skills and the meager success of their effort as the demands upon them increased and their charges came more and more from among types of persons probably not at all envisioned by De La Salle.

### **Blain's Evaluation**

Despite unfavorable situations which continued to arise as the eighteenth century wore on in the declining days of the *ancien régime* and as the general population became imbued with the spirit of independence and revolution, it is appropriate to conclude this examination of the pioneering efforts developed at Saint Yon with the words of Blain, which recall the promise of an earlier and more rewarding period in the history of that establishment:

It has been gratifying to see several of the inmates converted here and become truly repentant in the place where they were detained for that purpose. It is hard to believe how many who had been thoroughly delinquent found their conversion in this house; how many rebellious and uncontrollable children lost their hostility and lack of religion; how many others returned to their duties and the way of salvation. Some wanted to stay there the rest of their lives. Others asked for the habit of the Brothers and to be enrolled among them. Some wanted to leave only to enter monasteries. The majority returned to their families and showed by their way of life that they had left Saint Yon quite different from what they were when they entered. Most of those who were trained there bring honor to the house and give the example of their holy life as a proof of the good education they received at Saint Yon. . . . These examples of conversion are not rare,

and a long list could be made of the names of those who have found God there after having lost him. (CL 8: 32-34)

This testimony, though in sharp contrast to the unsettled years of the 1770's, is not to be ignored, since Blain lived at Saint Yon, and so is worthy of trust. Although his appraisal is prior to 1733, the year his work was published, Blain's account, nonetheless, puts into perspective the total Saint Yon concept and balances accounts of later and more sensational events.

## The Manor of Saint Yon: The Building and the People

### The Physical Plant

Research has uncovered five architectural plans showing the arrangement of the buildings at Saint Yon; details appear also in other publications and primary sources of the period. A comparison of the various plans would be beyond the purposes of this study, but some examination of one of them is useful in trying to understand the scope of the work done there.

Biographers of De La Salle were in agreement that his original intention for the house of detention at Saint Yon was that those youths committed by the royal decree should be housed in a separate building, but the several plans available are not clear as to how De La Salle's plan was actually implemented. Lucard stated simply that De La Salle set up a system of cells, while Blain, who witnessed most of the early history of the house of detention, reported that those committed were at first "locked up securely and carefully guarded," but that when they showed signs of repentance and willingness to cooperate, the doors of their rooms were left open, and the youths were free to participate in the prayer services of the house (CL 8: 33).

The establishment of this house of detention had required adjustments in the general layout of Saint Yon and was part of the considerable renovation and expansion that took place after the death of De La Salle. Already in 1733, there were at Saint Yon more than 100 persons of quite different ages, dispositions, character, states in life, and duties. Blain noted that since the death of De La Salle the size of the house of Saint Yon had been enlarged by two-thirds, that it was still too small to receive all the boarders who were being referred. De La Salle, he wrote, would "no longer recognize it if he came back to life."

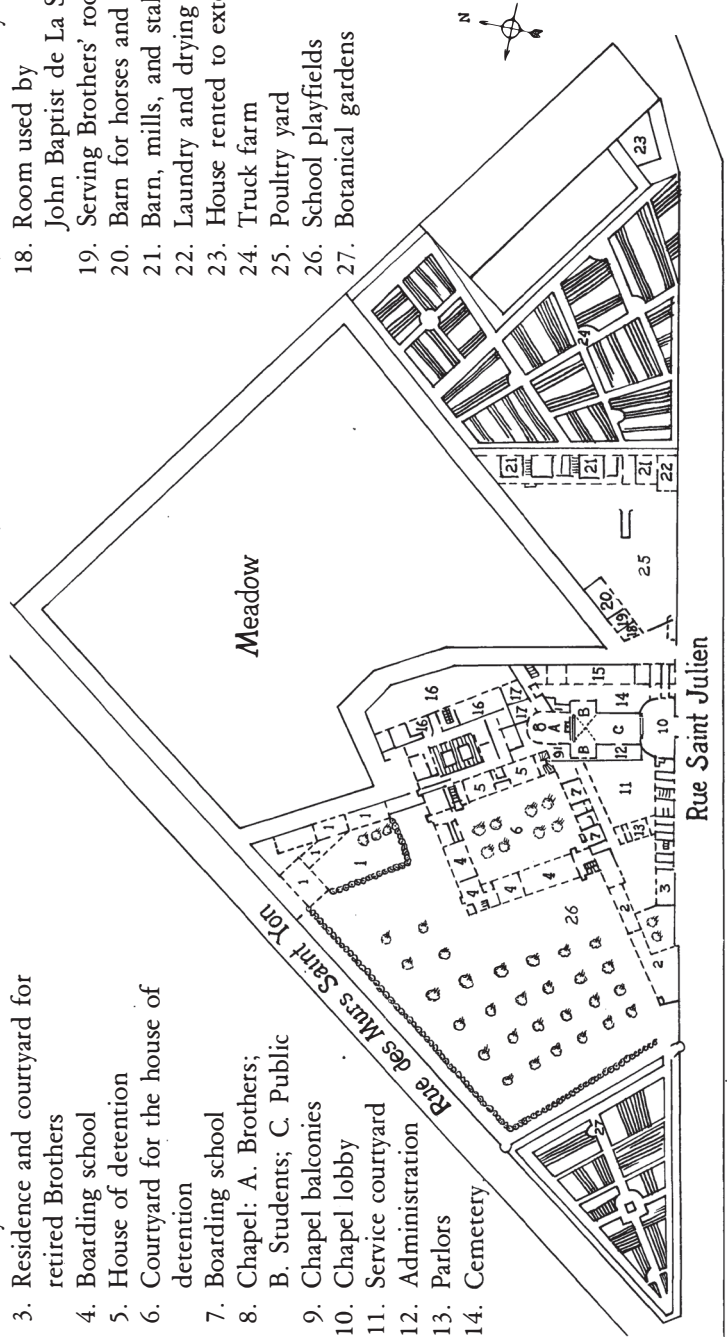
Every day, according to Blain, much to the astonishment of the public and even the Brothers themselves, large stone buildings were going up with only divine Providence as their foundation. A large group of rooms running east to west and enclosed within the former building, costing 25,000 livres, was started with a sum of 2,000 livres, which had been given by the father of a mentally retarded son for the child's residential care for the rest of his days.

Here Blain seems to be describing the construction of the quadrangle, bounded by buildings 2 and 3, shown on the ground plan, p. 94. According to one historical document, the period of major construction

1. Vocational, technical shops
2. Boarders' infirmary and courtyard
3. Residence and courtyard for retired Brothers
4. Boarding school
5. House of detention
6. Courtyard for the house of detention
7. Boarding school
8. Chapel: A. Brothers; B. Students; C. Public
9. Chapel balconies
10. Chapel lobby
11. Service courtyard
12. Administration
13. Parlors
14. Cemetery

**Ground Plan of the Manor of Saint Yon**  
Based on an Engraving of 1777

15. House of detention
16. Novitiate and courtyard
17. Brothers' infirmary
18. Room used by John Baptist de La Salle
19. Serving Brothers' room
20. Barn for horses and cows
21. Barn, mills, and stalls
22. Laundry and drying room
23. House rented to externs
24. Truck farm
25. Poultry yard
26. School playfields
27. Botanical gardens



ended around 1740, and the exterior of the house of Saint Yon was not again altered until the time of the French Revolution. Important interior changes were made in 1778, and ten years later the Brothers undertook the construction of a new building.

## Ground Plan

The ground plan given here as well as the following description is based on a diagram drawn in 1777 and its accompanying explanation. However, parts of the 1777 diagram, drawn 20 years after the closing of the house of correction, are obscure and some of the explanation is indecipherable (ADSM). As a consequence there is some hypothesis here, based on references to Saint Yon in other sources and on assumptions of how an enterprise like Saint Yon must have been organized. Though lacking in strict documentation, the picture which emerges can give us a good idea of how so complex an undertaking operated.

Apart from the chapel, the main buildings at Saint Yon were contiguous, rectangular structures, each three or four stories high and each enclosing its own courtyard. With other lesser structures and the gardens, fields, and walls of the property, a self-contained plant was thus created.

Here are the major areas, numbered as on the ground plan, and their functions.

1. Shops for the technical training: for woodworking, clockmaking, and glazery; for the locksmith and the shoemaker; the lumber shed.
2. The boarders' infirmary and courtyard. (This may have originally been the building established by De La Salle to house the mentally ill.)
3. The residence and courtyard of the retired Brothers.
4. The boarding school. Basement: kitchen, bakery, scullery, stores. Dining rooms for students, novices, domestic staff. Second and third floors: the boarding school classrooms and dormitory for Saint Charles and Saint Nicolas divisions.
5. House of detention. Ground floor: dining rooms. Upper floors: assembly hall, classrooms, dormitories.
6. Courtyard for the house of detention.
7. Ground level: parlors; reception; quarters for some inmates, who were free to walk about the house, and also for the *bongarçons*.\*

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\*None of the dictionaries of the eighteenth century have the word *bongarçon*. To determine its meaning, a process of deductions may help. The term *bou-enfant* in the eighteenth century meant "children of the middle class (*bourgeoisie*)"; thus De La Salle, as a child, went to the *Collège des Bons-enfants* in Reims. By extension *bongarçon* could mean "young boy, or young man of the middle class." In French, the word *loge* (quarters) is without doubt to be taken as a

Upper floors: residence of the Director of the school, classrooms for drawing, decorative arts, mathematics, military and civil architecture, geography, hydrography, landscaping, and agriculture.

8. Chapel: A. Brothers; B. Students; C. Public. Sacristy in the basement.
9. Chapel balconies for house of detention inmates.
10. Chapel lobby, public entry. "decorated with doric and ionic columns."
11. Service courtyard. South side: entry gate. Upper floors: dormitories for Saint Louis and Saint Nicolas divisions.
12. Ground floor: administration, business offices. Upper floors: quarters of the Director General and Chaplain, infirmary and medical supplies; tailor shop.
13. Ground floor: parlors. Upper floors: bedrooms, linen supply, assembly rooms, or classrooms.
14. Cemetery.
15. House of detention. (Perhaps chiefly for mentally ill as their numbers grew.)
16. Novitiate and courtyard.
17. Brothers' infirmary.
18. Room used by John Baptist de La Salle.
19. Serving Brothers' room.
20. Barn for horses and cows.
21. Barn, mills, and stalls.
22. Laundry and drying room.
23. House rented to externs.
24. Vegetable garden.
25. Poultry yard.
26. School playfields.
27. Botanical gardens.

The rooms for assembly and other sleeping quarters on the second and third floors of buildings 4 and 5 opened onto long hallways, at the end of each of which was a copper water fountain. The assembly rooms were used for recreation on rainy days and for some of the prayer services. The bedroom furnishings were simple: a bed with a straw mat and a mattress, all resting on a wooden support, plus a pillow, two woolen

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synonym for *cachot* (cell). The location of these quarters in the ground plan of Saint Yon favors this hypothesis. The quarters of the *bongarçons* could then mean the "cells where the young men of the middle class were locked up." The correspondence following the rebellion of July 8, 1774, also uses such expressions as "secure bedroom" (*chambre forte*), "locked bedroom" (*chambre à guichet*) and "cell" (*cachot*).

blankets, and a wooden chair. The house also supplied bed sheets. It may be supposed that those in detention—as well as the ordinary boarders—had the use of a jar of water, a basin for washing, and a chamber pot. These bedrooms were not heated, and the inmates sometimes suffered from the cold. One inmate even says that he went to bed with his shoes on “because of the severe cold.”

Sometimes the inmates were allowed to warm themselves by rooming with those who had a heated bedroom. According to the inventory already cited, the sleeping quarters of the Brothers and of the regular boarders were no better (AMG).

The dining room for those committed by royal decree was on the ground floor of building 5. Two references indicate that the tables probably had cloth coverings and that the inmates were given napkins. For one thing, De La Salle considered that a dining table ought to be covered with cloth and that it would be impolite to eat without a napkin; for another, the large number of tablecloths and napkins in the inventory of Saint Yon indicates that these were used by the inmates.

One description of building 7 states that there were on the ground level a small parlor, which was described as very secure with a grill separating the visitors from the inmates, and a number of sleeping rooms for those who “had liberty to walk about the house.” These may have been the *bongarçons* mentioned already. The ground level may also at one time have been the location of the “20 rooms, 6 feet square, with fireplace” which the Brothers rented to those in the house of detention. Doubtless, these rooms were reserved for those who behaved well and who paid extra. According to the documents dated 1791, some of the inmates had been able to furnish their rooms quite comfortably. One of the inmates, Leroux, for example, in addition to a fireplace, had for himself a mattress, a featherbed, a blanket, a straw mat, a large cushion, and a canopy over the bed. Another inmate, Labaume, in addition to his fireplace, had two mattresses, a folding bed, a quilt, an easy chair, and a desk chair.

Despite limitations and the evidence of severity and restraint, the inmates at Saint Yon were well off in comparison with those held in the *Tour-des-Insensés* of Rouen. At Saint Yon the inmates were kept isolated only when necessary. The physical plant was so arranged as to foster a great deal of communication among the various groups. The Brothers, too, knew how to intermingle with each of the groups.

But the problems grew as the institution grew and inmates became more and more difficult for the Brothers to deal with, many of them requiring high security. In 1774 a document describing the city of Rouen noted that the ordinary boarders at Saint Yon were totally separated from those in detention, but this separation was only relative, as the abuses attributed to the members of the sodality have indicated (ADSM).

## Special Security Measures

Early in his detention, the inmate Desurmont was confined to one of the special cells, a life quite different from what he had been accustomed to as a member of the King's guard:

I am suffering the most barbarous of slavery . . . a state so terrible, a thousand times worse than death, putting up with every imaginable horror every moment. I am overcome with smells that suffocate me day and night, and with a weakness and shaking that overcomes my whole body for lack of proper nourishment, fresh air, and exercise. (ADSM)

A heavy line drawn across this text—apparently in the same ink—seems to retract what was just written. Elsewhere, Desurmont noted: “I am in between four walls in a room five feet wide and six feet long, including my miserable bed and on one side a small space for a fireplace” (ADSM).

Another inmate, De La Boulaye, wrote:

I am locked up in a dark corner, six-foot square. I go out only once in a while to get some fresh air in the courtyard. Sometimes the Brother opens my cell in the morning, sometimes in the evening, often not at all for several days. I would suffer much less if I were able to occupy myself reading or writing up to nine or ten at night, but it is already night in my cell by six o'clock. The only light comes in through a small window 20 inches in diameter. (ADSM)

Those who were particularly maladjusted or were having a bad influence on the others were put into the cells. When they consigned the inmates there, as a matter of prudence, the Brothers generally had recourse to what was accepted as the policeman's right to protect himself.

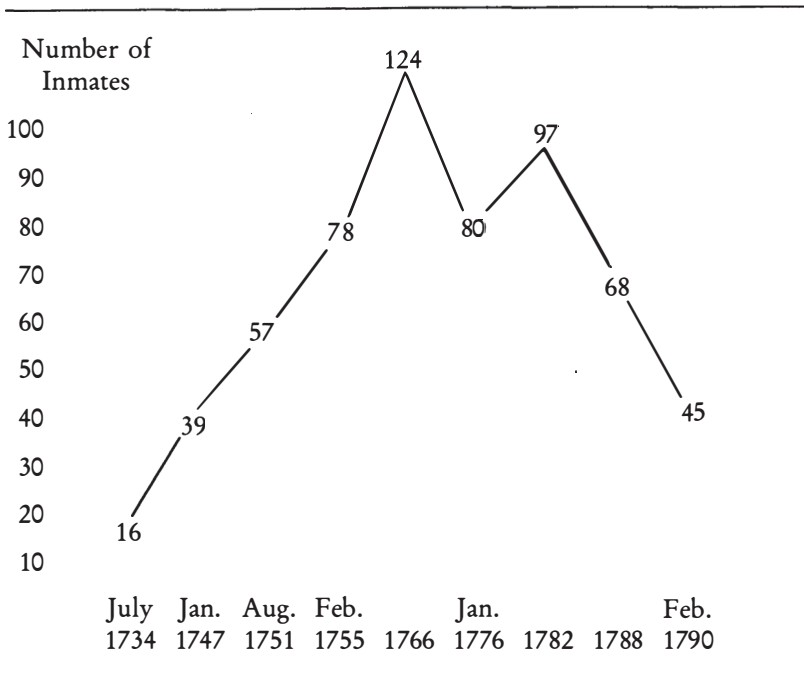
The wing for the mentally retarded (*imbéciles*) may eventually have been moved to building 15 because of increasing numbers (see Table 5). Brother Solenne, who served as Prefect of the house of detention from 1782 to 1786, called it the wing for “the mentally ill” (*insensés*). The inmates suffering serious mental illness, “sometimes bad tempered and dangerous,” were locked up in cells specially constructed, with a small opening through which their food was given to them. These cells even had chains to restrain the occupants if it became necessary. The cells had “neither candle nor fire” and their “wooden beds were beams joined to the wall.” In them were a straw mat, mattress, sheets, and blankets. For the mentally retarded there were additionally a dining room and a room with a stove. Those who were only slightly afflicted enjoyed “much more freedom” than those in other parts of the house of detention. They were allowed to walk in the garden in the morning and in the evening (ADSM).

### The Number of Inmates

The archives of the Generalate of the Brothers in Rome and those of the city of Rouen contain considerable information about the inmates confined to the house of detention by royal decree. However, for our purpose it will suffice to give some indication of how over the years the numbers and ages of the inmates changed, as well as the reasons for detention and the length of sentences.

The earliest document attesting to the formal confinement of anyone at Saint Yon is dated 1726 and concerns Sauveur Machuel, son of a Rouen printer. In his history of the Manor of Saint Yon, Canon Farcy gives a list of the persons detained in the house of detention. Though the author gives the impression that his list is complete, it clearly is not. The archives of Rouen have in fact preserved several lists of inmates of the house of detention, which were drawn up at the direction of the authorities. They indicate a fluctuation in the number of inmates residing at Saint Yon at any given time. Altogether there are 18 lists, but unfortunately they are not all dated. Some of them have been used to make the accompanying graph.

**Table 1**  
**Number of Inmates**



The high number of inmates for the year 1766 may indicate some sort of accumulated total reflecting admissions and discharges, not the number at one time during the year.

The decline of numbers after 1782 may well reflect the change in attitude mentioned earlier. The seeds of revolution had been already planted by such men as Voltaire, Rousseau, and the Encyclopedists; people were resisting arbitrary imprisonments, and the government, to placate demands, must itself have been restricting the use of prison sentences based on decrees and complaints.

### Social Status

Farcy's catalogues of the house of detention show that there were inmates of every social class at Saint Yon. Several broad social groups can be distinguished: members of the nobility, military officers, merchants, members of the working class, priests, canons, and religious.

The inmates belonging to the nobility and the wealthy bourgeoisie were quite numerous. Several sources indicate that they represented at least thirty-five percent of the inmates at Saint Yon. Farcy includes such comments as: "from the family of the Prince of Conde, Chevalier de . . . , Baron de . . . , Marquis de . . . , Gentleman, son of the King's Councillor, son of the Lieutenant General of Berry, son of the President of the Parliament of Douai, son of the King's Brigadier, son of the Director of the Post Office."

The majority of the military officers who were inmates at Saint Yon also belonged to the nobility, several of them lieutenants in the king's bodyguard.

Sons of merchants were numerous. Farcy's term "business class" (*commerçant*) had a wide meaning, for it included a "son of one of the greatest shipbuilders, son of a merchant shipowner, of a businessman, of a merchant, son of a goldsmith, of a watchmaker, of an upholsterer, of a baker."

It was not unusual to incarcerate priests and religious also. Farcy gives the names of 50, about ten percent of the inmates on his list. Among these are several canons, pastors, and deacons from diocesan clergy, as well as Dominicans, Premonstratensians, Benedictines, and Augustinians. The detention of clergy and religious was usually requested either by their bishops or by their superiors. Some of the Brothers themselves were inmates of the house of detention at Saint Yon, namely Brothers Mandé and Jacob, while Brothers Memin and Zachary were inmates at Bicêtre (ADSM).

### The Age of the Inmates

Farcy furnishes only a few details concerning the age of the inmates at Saint Yon. He notes that the youngest was a certain Hauguet, J.B., only

14. Many others were much older. Unfortunately, there is not enough information to allow an estimate of the number of inmates who were under the age of 20 at the start of their detention, but one document listing deaths at Saint Yon includes 16 inmates who died before that age.

Data provided by three reports in the Rouen archives for the years 1755, 1776, and 1790 allow further study of the age of the inmates. These reports are sufficiently representative of the period between 1750 and the closing of the house of detention in December 1791, and are summarized in Table 2, which gives the numbers below the age of 30 and those above that age. The reports are precise about the ages of all the inmates except the very young, each of whom is simply designated “young man.” These are included here in the category “under 30” (ADSM).

**Table 2**  
**Age of Inmates**

Age	1755	1776	1790
Below 30	48%	36%	11%
Above 30	52%	65%	89%

Clearly there was a continual rise in the age of the inmates during the period from 1755 to 1790.

### **Reasons for Detention**

Farcy gives the reason for detention in 290 out of 537 cases. Table 3 groups some of these reasons and the number of persons committed in each category:

**Table 3**  
**Specific Reasons for Detention**

102	Indolence, disorderly conduct
65	Emotional instability, mental illness, low intelligence
29	Debauchery, seduction
19	Violence
18	Drunkenness
17	Robbery
12	Indebtedness
11	Profligacy

The cases in another listing can be summarized in two general categories: antisocial behavior and mental deficiency. Table 4 gives the result based on this division:

**Table 4**  
**General Reasons for Detention**

Antisocial Behavior	75%
Mental Deficiency	25%

There is value in analyzing the chronology of changes in the reasons for detention given in the three reports already examined.

Two trends are evident over the years: the number of commitments for antisocial behavior declined, while the number of commitments for mental deficiency increased. Other documents indicate that this trend was intensified during the ten years prior to the closing of the house of detention and contributed to the problems the Brothers experienced as their ministry at Saint Yon changed.

**Table 5**  
**Chronology of Change in Reasons for Detention**

Reasons	1755	1776	1790
Antisocial Behavior	66%	52%	15%
Mental Deficiency	17%	42%	85%
Unknown	17%	6%	

Table 6 shows the percentages of inmates in the house of detention who remained for a term of less than ten years. During the period between 1755 and 1790 the length of placement increased, and the number in detention for less than two years dropped considerably.

Table 7 indicates that the length of stay of persons committed by order of the royal court increased during the final years of the house of detention at Saint Yon. The shortest detention on record was that of one Le Cordier, which lasted only three months. The longest were those of De La Hunaudais, 32 years, Bornereau, 35 years, and Billot and Caignard, 41 years each.

**Table 6**  
**Length of Detention, Short Term**

Duration	1755	1776	1790
1-2 yrs.	46%	30%	20%
3-4 yrs.	28%	13%	13%
5-6 yrs.	17%	21%	13%
7-8 yrs.	9%	4%	5%
9-10 yrs.		4%	5%

**Table 7**  
**Length of Detention, Long Term**

Duration	1755	1776	1790
1-10 yrs.	100%	72%	62%
11-20 yrs.		15%	26%
21-30 yrs.		13%	4%
31-41 yrs.			8%

## The Final Story of Saint Yon

The judicial system in France during the eighteenth century allowed only two courses of action regarding court-committed persons. They could be taken into custody at the state's expense, in which case they would be prisoners with all the social consequences that would entail. Or they could be designated as persons assigned to a supervised residence, in which case they themselves or their families were financially responsible. Within the monarchical and parliamentary system of the time, the Brothers had no option but to accept these alternatives.

The establishment of Saint Yon itself shows that De La Salle was not opposed to having the Brothers work in institutions in which the cost was borne by the users. Since, however, the high cost of room and board at Saint Yon did not allow for any but the well-to-do to receive even minimum care, the Brothers frequently interceded with the civil authorities on behalf of the less fortunate who had been committed there.

Because the program was so successful, Saint Yon attracted families whose problem children had previously been kept at public expense in the general charity hospice of Rouen. Not all parents were able to pay the costs, as is revealed in the complaint of one widow, who claimed that she could not give her 15-year-old son the education he needed, "because the cost of the house of detention at Saint Yon is more than I can pay" (ADSM).

Although the Brothers accepted the judicial and social system of their day, they did manage to organize a house of detention that was unique, one in which more humane ways of treating troubled and troublesome persons were developed. The Brothers at Saint Yon were, in effect, pioneers in this regard.

At Saint Yon the inmates were not left to themselves all day. Activities of considerable variety followed one upon the other: classes, manual work, prayer services, leisure activities. Rather than isolate the inmates, the Brothers provided numerous opportunities for human relationships which had a highly rehabilitative value. In a milieu of sharply differentiated classes, this constituted remarkable social and educational progress.

Considered a model of its kind in its day, the house of detention at Saint Yon attracted widespread referrals, and consequently Brothers were asked to open similar programs at Angers in 1741, and at Maréville near Nancy in 1759. In time the *Registers of Admissions* listed inmates from Holland, Spain, Portugal, England; even from overseas, from Martinique, Santo Domingo, and Guadalupe.

For a short time after the death of John Baptist de La Salle in 1719, the work at Saint Yon ran into trouble with the Church and the state. These difficulties, however, were ameliorated somewhat by the canonical establishment of the Community of Brothers of the Christian Schools by Pope Benedict XIII in 1725, and by the approval of Saint Yon as a school and a house of detention by the parliament of Normandy.

Supported by these formal recognitions, a series of energetic and progressive Directors brought considerable success to the establishment, but by the late eighteenth century, the original concept of combining a tuition boarding school, a house of correction, and a house of detention had been modified. Saint Yon became almost exclusively a house of detention and an asylum for the mentally ill. The care of the mentally ill on such a large scale was something for which the Brothers were unprepared.

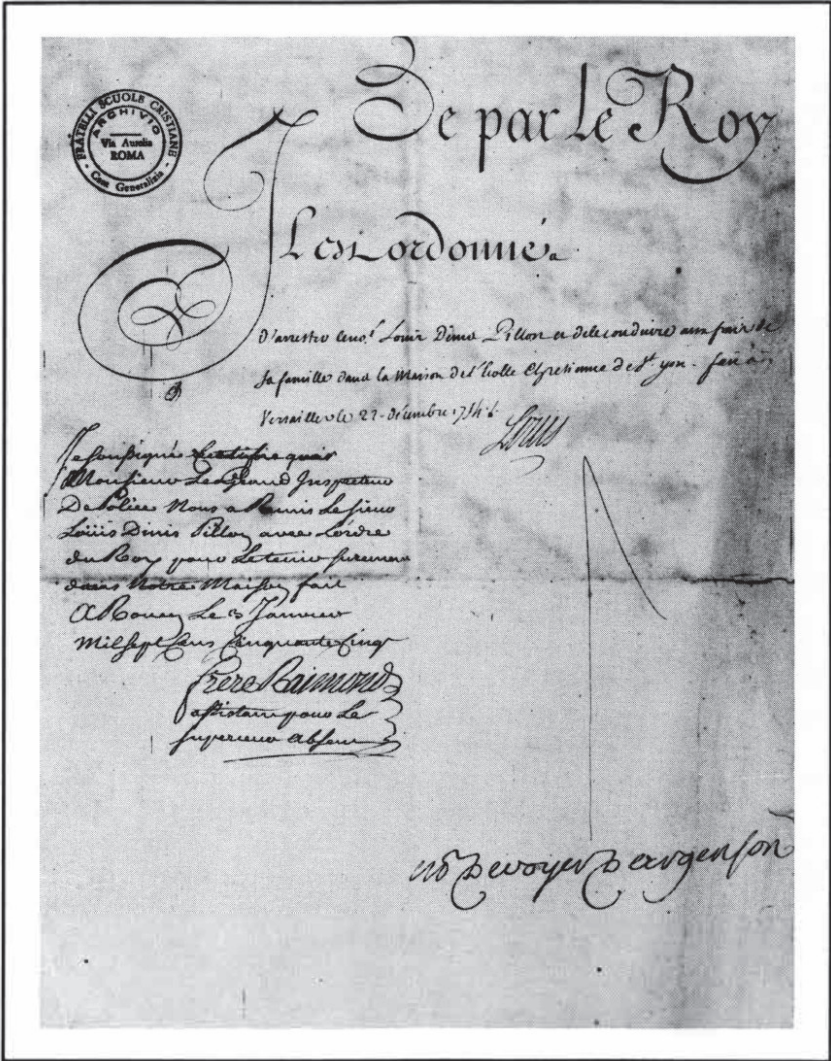
With the French Revolution and the secularization of the religious congregations in France, the Brothers were expelled from Saint Yon and their property confiscated. Under government control the building complex at Saint Yon became at various times a prison, an arsenal, a military encampment, and a military hospital.

After the revolution, in the 1820's, the city council of Rouen regained control of the property and gradually returned it to some of its earlier uses. It eventually became a poorhouse and an asylum for the mentally ill, at one time housing over 900 men and women in crowded and deplorable conditions.

At the same time the Brothers resumed and expanded their earlier apostolates, including the care of court-committed persons and serious felons. Between 1840 and 1848, the Brothers administered eight of the major prisons of France.

In 1865 the Rouen council decided to decentralize its programs, and it established hospices around the city for those persons requiring special care. By 1880 the last of the patients had been removed from Saint Yon. The new establishments for a time retained the name Saint Yon, and the entire program for the mentally ill was known as the Saint Yon System.

In recent years the original Saint Yon property has come into private ownership, and some of the early buildings have been renovated.



Facsimile, une lettre de cachet.

## Appendix A

### *Lettres de Cachet*

Besides the "Great Royal Seal," the kings of France beginning in the thirteenth century had a smaller seal called the "secret seal," in the fourteenth century called the "signet," and in the sixteenth, the *cachet*. The purpose of these seals was to ensure the confidentiality of any private letters and announcements, public documents, or orders concerning private persons.

*Lettres de cachet* were used to summon political and judicial bodies, to establish and regulate public ceremonies, to announce promotions, and to order official expulsion for an individual by imprisonment or exile. Eventually the term *lettres de cachet* came to be identified solely with this latter use.

*Lettres de cachet* were not actually signed by the king (though some authors say that they were); the formula read, "On behalf of the king, (person named) is ordered to be arrested and taken to. . . I, the undersigned (secretary of state) certify that I possess in hand the order of the king, of which this is a copy."

Prisoners under *lettres de cachet* fell into three classes: those guilty of crimes against the state, of whom there were very few; persons in conflict with families, who were more numerous; and those in conflict with the police. In the latter case, the *lettre de cachet* simply enforced after some delay whatever the judicial procedures had previously determined.

According to the historian De Robillard de Beaurepaire, the date at which *lettres de cachet* began to be used in these specific ways cannot be fixed precisely. They seem to have been introduced little by little as the authority of the king increased and the executive power placed tighter controls on the judiciary, which was itself inclined to take authority into its own hands. De Beaurepaire writes, "This was certainly a detestable abuse, a fatal attack against the fundamental principle of personal freedom, and was blamed on the *ancien régime*."

In many *lettres de cachet* the prisoner was designated by his family name only, without surname, title, address, or any other qualification. In some cases the name was not spelled correctly.

The document was easily obtained. Under the ministries of Lavrillière, Sartine, Vergennes, and Lemoir, *lettres de cachet* became so numerous that they were no longer handwritten, but printed and handed out to commanders, governors, superintendents of provinces, and to some members of the royal court, with a blank space for the name of the condemned. The signature of the king was copied in order not to disturb his majesty with too many requests.

De Robillard de Beaurepaire believed that it is, nevertheless, necessary to be fair even toward unjust practices. He remarks:

However bold this assertion may seem at first, I feel I am justified in stating that the *lettres de cachet* were more often a means of protecting persons than of dealing severely with them. They were as much a reflection of the idea that a person is bound to his father's authority as they were of the idea of political power. . . . No doubt there were individuals who were sacrificed to the avarice of unfeeling parents and to false accusations; to maintain otherwise would be careless and a ridiculous paradox. But in the majority of cases these letters of the king dealt with people who would have been treated more severely by ordinary justice than by the good pleasure of the king, whether they were being singled out as mentally ill, or apprehended for their own good or to preserve the honor of their name or of their social class.

Correspondence preserved in the police records of Rouen indicates that those who wanted to detain a person by a *lettre de cachet* had to present to the general superintendent a memoir stating the reasons for detention. The superintendent in turn transmitted the dossier to a Minister of State, who, if he deemed it necessary, could ask for additional information. Once the dossier was complete, it was submitted to the king, who legally and theoretically had the final say. When the *lettre de cachet* was delivered, the police were charged with making the arrest and delivering the person concerned to the designated house without delay, unless otherwise directed (ADSM).

The number of *lettres de cachet* was already considerable under Louis XIV, and it became greater under Louis XV. It declined markedly under his successor, Louis XVI, so that it was natural to consider him "the most humane, the most kind of all princes." In 1784, Baron de Breteuil, secretary of state, addressed a circular to the superintendents in his department, and set forth with clarity the principles for handling the royal orders. This was a move to reform the system at the very moment when it was about to be officially abolished.

Louis XVI, yielding to a decree of the national assembly on January 12, 1790, concerning prisoners detained by special order, required governors, superintendents of royal departments, commanders of state prisons, and superiors of houses of detention to send to the national assembly a true and certified record of the name, surname, age, and reason for detention of each prisoner. A committee was appointed to carry out this decree, and took the name, "Committee on the *lettres de cachet*."

Despite the steps toward reform and the progress taken by the assembly and conceded by Louis XVI, France was still in the legal miasma

of the time of Louis XV. Reformers might dream that when the national assembly abolished *lettres de cachet* in March 1790 freedom was established—but it was only when the Bastille was taken and those incarcerated there and in other provinces were liberated that revolutionaries perceived the full extent of the abuses of personal rights and liberty which arbitrary imprisonment had perpetrated.



## Appendix B

# Continuing the Tradition of Saint Yon

What follows is a partial list of places in which the Brothers of the Christian Schools and their associates are currently working, or have until recently been working, in service to disadvantaged youth. These institutions and programs are in the tradition of the establishment at Saint Yon.

The groups identified here reflect a broad perception of the concept of what it means to be “disadvantaged,” and the services offered reflect a caring and creative response. We find Brothers and their associates involved in various forms of educational works not only with the financially poor, but with migrants, refugees, victims of broken families, drug addicts, and a host of other victims of the social or economic maladies which trouble modern youth and their families, whatever their social class.

It should also be noted that three groups which predominated at Saint Yon during its later years are not represented to any extensive degree in the current work of the Brothers: adults, serious offenders, and the mentally ill.

The information herewith was initially gathered by Brother Léon Laurier, the Institute’s Education Secretary, at the request of the Editors of Lasallian Publications.

That initial list was circulated by the Editors among those named in it, among Visitors for whose districts no ministry had been reported, and, again by Brother Léon, among the participants at the 1986 General Chapter of the Christian Brothers. Finally, immediately prior to publication, each place named had the opportunity to correct and update the information. This listing, therefore, is reasonably accurate as of June 15, 1987.

The Editors are grateful to Brother Léon and to all who contributed. We apologize for errors or omissions. These will be corrected in any subsequent printing if brought to our attention.

Brother Francis Huether, FSC

## AFRICA

### Cameroon

#### **Centre d'Accueil de Bependa, B.P. 5377**

Reception and rehabilitation center for delinquent minors committed by the courts of Douala. Term: 1 month to 2 years, generally. Staff: lay people. Brothers have temporarily withdrawn. Founded: 1959; closed 1968 due to lack of Brothers. Supported by the government.

## EUROPE

### Belgium

#### **Le Bâti**

*Rue de Charlerille 20, B-6876 Houdremont, Belgium*

Rehabilitation center. Students: number varies, with 6 in residence. Staff: 2 Brothers. Founded: 1975. Supported by *Association sans but Lucratif* (A.S.B.L.), gifts, and fees.

#### **Chanteclair**

*Route de Bievre 2, 6840, Carlsbourg, Belgium*

Reception center and home for orphans and neglected homeless children. Students: 16. Staff: 2 Brothers, 6 lay people. Founded: 1974. Supported by the government.

#### **Ecole Clerfayt**

*Chateau de Clerfayt, B-7131 Binche, Belgium*

Center for special education for youth 6 to 13 incapable of following in the normal educational structure. Students: 94. Term: 6 years. Staff: 1 Brother, 19 lay people. Founded: September 1965. Supported by state Office of Education.

#### **Ecole Professionnelle D'Enseignement Special "Reumonjoie"**

*Chemin de Reumont, 135, a B-5730 Malonne*

Staff: 84. Students: 260, half boarders, half day students. Special education programs for students of low academic ability or with behavioral problems. Extensive and varied technical training; state supported; no precise information given, no foundation date.

#### **The Fraternal Community Of Bâti**

*Bâti de la Foire 5, B-6876 Houdremont, Belgium*

Rehabilitation center for the mentally handicapped, and service to their families in a concerned community setting, chiefly on weekends and during vacations, in the spirit of Jean Vamiez. Students: number varies. Staff: 2 Brothers, 2 lay

people, parish clergy. Founded: 1976. Supported by A.S.B.L., a non-profit group, and donations.

### **Huis de Weijers (Kindertehuis)**

*Hewvelsven 1, B-3650 Dilsen, Belgium*

Home for neglected or handicapped youth, ages to 21. Students: 12 (maximum). Staff: 3 Brothers, 6 lay people. Founded: June 1979. Supported by the Department of Justice.

### **La Maison**

*Rue A. de Latour 46, 1030 Brussels, Belgium*

Residential community for young people prior to their entering upon independent adult life. Experiment in family living. Students: 6. Term: 3 to 4 years. Staff: 1 Brother, with volunteers. Founded: September 1976. Supported by benefactors.

### **Marana-Tha (Viens chez nous)**

*Rue de Forbo, 4, B-5501, Lisogne-Dinant, Belgium*

Rehabilitation center for the mentally handicapped, and family services. Students: number varies. Staff: 2 Brothers, 2 lay people, parish priest. Founded: 1973. Supported by A.S.B.L., and in part by families and gifts.

### **St. Michael School**

*Margaretalaan 70, 3600 Genk-Winterslag, Belgium*

Center for multiethnic education for children of foreign workers. Students: 290 in an elementary school, plus 180 in counseling. Term: 9 years. Staff: 3 Brothers, 13 lay people. Founded: 1913, Brothers joined staff in 1926. Supported by donations and the government.

### **The Mutien-Marie Medico-Pedagogic Center**

*Rue des Recollets, 1, B-6340 Philippeville, Belgium*

A special education center with five branches in four sites.

- 1) A secondary school of special education for mentally and emotionally disturbed youth. 87 students.
- 2) The Medico-pedagogic Professional Institute.
- 3) Center for occupational therapy for the non-educable at Jamagne, 8 pupils.
- 4) The Rosary Day Center for mentally handicapped adults.
- 5) The Tournevent Day Center for mentally handicapped adults. Students: 130, including 30 adults. Staff: 4 Brothers, 48 lay people. Foundations: 1978, 1986, 1987.

Supported by the government and the French Society of Concern.

### **Bl. Mutien-Marie School**

*Rue de Fond de Malonne, 129, B-5730, Malonne, Belgium*

Primary School for Special Education. Students: 120. Staff: 25 lay people. Founded: 1960. Supported by the government.

## England

### **Benburb Base**

*369 Camden Road, London N7 OSH, England*

A hostel providing accommodation and employment services for young men at risk, homeless and without support in London. Residents: 14. Length of stay: 6 to 8 weeks. Staff: 3 Brothers. Founded: 1979. Supported by the Department of Health and Social Services of England and the London Borough of Richmond.

### **De La Salle House (Ockenden Venture)**

*158 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX 2 7BP, England*

Home for Vietnamese refugee children. Students: 9. Term: 3 years. Staff: 1 Brother, 2 lay people. Founded: 1984. Supported by the District of London and the Department of Health and Social Services of England.

### **St. William's Community Home**

*Market Weighton, York, YO4 3HA England*

Residential school for delinquent or maladjusted adolescent boys. Students: 45. Average length of stay: 18 months. Staff: 2 Brothers, 50 lay people; 1 priest. Founded: 1856; Brothers have been here since 1912. Supported by the Diocese and by the Home Office for serious offenders.

Brothers once conducted schools similar to these in Nantwich, Cheshire; and in Hartlebury, Worcester. Still operating under lay staffing is Yarmouth, Yorkshire.

## France

### **The De La Salle Community**

*Place de Noailles, 15, Bâtiment F-60000 Beauvais, France*

Brothers' community residing in a slum area, giving witness and offering family and educational services. Staff: 3 Brothers. Founded: 1986. Supported by professional salaries of the Brothers and by a retired Brother.

### **Collège De La Salle**

*42 Blvd. Vauban, 59210 Coudekerque Branche, France*

School of special education for retarded children (I.Q. 80). Students: 64. Term: 4 years. Staff: 1 Brother, 5 lay people. Supported by the government, except for construction.

### **Oscar Romero School**

*5, Rue Gambetta, F-95140 Garges les Gonesse, France*

Day school for boys and girls, for social and educational adjustment, reduction of illiteracy, and training for employment. Students: about 60, 9 to 17 years old. Term: 3 years. Staff: 2 Brothers, 6 lay people. Founded: 1978. Supported by contract with the government, through tax credits to parents, and by the Institute.

**Guénange-Richemont Project**

*45, Route de Metzervisse, 57310 Guénange, France*

Residential school for young people with behavioral or emotional handicaps; students committed by the Departments of Social Service and of Justice. Students: 170. Term: 3 Years. Staff: 3 Brothers, 132 lay people. Founded: 1891, under Brothers' direction since 1902. Supported by the state.

**The Brothers' Community**

*69 Rue Servient, 69003, Lyon, France*

A community of retired Brothers, working with the Christian and Muslim university students from North Africa, and children of foreign workers, in a combination of retreats, daily and weekend prayer services, and educational support. Part of a broader service to adolescents in the region.

**Au Service de l'instruction des Enfants Tsiganes (A.S.E.T.)**

*12, Avenue du 8 Mai 1945, 93500 Pantin, France*

Seven mobile units providing basic education to children of gypsies and itinerant families in the suburbs of Paris. Students: Approximately 1,000 in the suburbs of Paris. Staff: 5 Brothers, 8 lay people, 1 priest, 2 other religious. Founded: 1969; mobile units added in 1982. Salaries paid by State Education office, mobile units by the French Regional Administration of the Brothers; equipment by private services.

**Gabriel Drolin Center**

*26 Place Pierre Semard, 44400 Reze, France*

Training school for teachers and aides in literacy programs for the elementary schools, and for older persons who have not yet learned to read. Staff: 2 or 3 Brothers, 10 lay people. Founded: 1968.

**Collège Sainte Marie**

*54, Rue St. Antoine, 59100 Roubaix, France*

Day school for slightly retarded youth (I.Q. 80), ages 12 to 16; and children of migrant workers from south of France, north Africa, Turkey, requiring help in school. Students: 360. Term: 4 Years. Staff: 5 Brothers, 20 lay people. Founded: 1931. Supported by the French government, except for construction.

**Academy for Deaf Youth**

*40 Rue Franklin, 42000 Saint Etienne, France*

Vocational school for boys and girls, ages 4 to 20; 14 school classes and three shops: woodwork, painting, cooking. Students: 114. Staff: 6 Brothers, 44 lay people. Founded: 1844. Supported by French government, with some contributions from the families.

**Collège De La Salle**

*22, Clos des Villas, 59300 Valenciennes, France*

School for retarded youth, ages 12 to 16. Students: 64. Staff: 2 Brothers, 6 lay people. Founded: 1980. Supported by the government, except for construction.

## Holland

At one time the District of Holland conducted two orphanages, with a total population of over 600. Government policy is now opposed to such large institutions, and most Brothers of the District are advanced in age. Brothers are on the missions, and presently three are working with disturbed youth in Holland.

## North Ireland

### **St. Patrick's Training School**

*Glen Road, Belfast BT11 8BX, N. Ireland*

Residential school for boys committed by the courts for 1, 2, or 3 years, or sent from broken homes by social workers. Students: 120. Term: 1 year. Staff: 7 Brothers, 3 Sisters, 110 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1917. Supported by the Government of Northern Ireland.

### **De La Salle Boys' Home**

*Kircubbin, Newtownards, Co. Down, N. Ireland*

Originally an orphanage for boys from broken homes, closed 1985 due to new policy on community care in local areas. Students: 40. Staff: 7 Brothers, 2 Sisters, 25 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1950. Supported by the Government of Northern Ireland

## Republic of Ireland

### **Finglas Children's Centre**

*Finglas West, Dublin 11, Ireland*

St. Michael's National Assessment Centre. Boys sent by courts or by social workers for assessment. Students: 65. Staff: 6 Brothers, 3 Sisters, 60 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1971. Supported by the Education Department of the Irish Government.

### **Kenilworth Square**

*49 Kenilworth Square, Dublin 6, Ireland*

Hostel for rehabilitated alcoholics: temporary accommodation, employment service. Residents: places for 10. Staff: 3 Brothers. Founded: October 1985. Supported by volunteers and donations.

## Italy

### **Foundation for the Young**

*Piazzale dei Servi 3, 43100 Parma, Italy*

Center for treatment and rehabilitation of adolescents. Students: 38 in residence;

15 in outpatient programs. Term: 3 to 5 years. Staff: 3 Brothers, 2 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1948. Supported by the state, except for construction.

**The Bartholomew Longo Institute**

*Via Sacra, 39, 80045 Pompei, Italy*

Residential school for orphans and disturbed and disorderly youth. Students: 138. Term: 3 years. Staff: 16 Brothers, 18 lay people, 1 priest. Supported by the Sodality of Our Lady of the Rosary.

**Poland**

**Czestochowa, Kard. S. Wyszynskiego 38, Poland**

A home for retarded or otherwise handicapped children. Students: 80. Staff: 12 Brothers, 10 lay people, 8 priests. Founded: August 1975. Supported by *Caritas*, through the government.

**Czestochowa, Krotka 28, Poland**

An orphanage and clandestine school during WW II. The German occupation forces tolerated the orphanage, but not the school, which survived by frequently changing its location. Students: 60 to 80. Staff: 6 Brothers. Supported by Polish organizations and the efforts of the Brothers.

**Dusznike, Zdroj, Poland**

Home and primary school for war orphans. Students: 80 to 120. Staff: 7 Brothers; 12 lay people. Founded: 1945. Supported by the government and the efforts of the Brothers. Brothers were dismissed with the change in government in 1949.

**Laski Warszawskie, Poland**

School for young blind persons, operated by Sisters; six Brothers taught here from 1970 to 1974. Supported by the Church.

**Liskow, Poland**

Between the two world wars a priest, Waclaw Blizinski, established a model village for poor peasants, near Kalisz. Between 1935 and 1938 Brothers served as teachers, worked with the orphans, and established the technical school. The work was destroyed in the war.

**Uszyce 318, Poland**

Planned for September 1986. A residence for handicapped and retarded children, with 20 children to start; expansion anticipated.

**Zawadzkie, Czarna 2, Poland**

A residence and training center for retarded children and young people. Students are prepared to live a life with minimal schooling and with little ultimate possibility

for really independent living. Students: 120. Staff: 15 Brothers, 2 lay people. Supported by *Caritas*, through the government.

## Portugal

### College of St. Cajetan

*Maximinos, 4700 Braga, Portugal*

School and residence for orphans, children of migrant and destitute families. Students: 105. Term: 10 years. Staff: 6 Brothers, 6 prefects, 8 service employees, 1 nurse, 1 social worker, 1 priest. Founded: 1791; Brothers arrived in 1933. Supported by the government, income from farm and shops, fees according to ability to pay.

## Scotland

### St. Joseph's School

*Tranent, East Lothian, EH 33 1DT, Scotland*

Residential school for delinquent and deprived boys. Students: 30 residents and 20 day. Term: 2 years. Staff: 2 Brothers plus 3 in retirement; 45 lay people, including domestics; served by Passionist Community. Founded: 1914. Supported by the Lothian Regional Council, formerly part of a national service funded by the Scottish Office.

Brothers maintained similar schools for years at Mauchline, Ayrshire; Glasgow (2 schools, both now run by lay staff); and Gartmore in Perthshire (recently closed).

## Spain

### School of St. Roc

*Barcelona, Spain*

Inner-city school for gypsies. Students: 250. Staff: 3 Brothers, 7 lay people, 2 priests. Founded: 1972. Supported by gifts from colleagues and confreres.

### Centro D'Observacio

*08100 Mollet del Valles, Barcelona, Spain*

Residential school for court-committed, disturbed youth; maintained for the prevention of delinquency. Students: about 400, variable. Term: 2 months. Staff: 8 Brothers, 30 lay people. Founded: 1966. Supported by the Department of Justice.

### El Camino Professional School

*Camino De Olatz, Huarte, Navarra, Spain*

Reformatory for court-committed youth, 14 to 16 years old who have not completed basic education. Staff: 18 Brothers, 5 lay people. Term: 2 years. Supported by the State of Navarra.

### **Archbishop Gandasequi Institute**

*Segovia Highway, Valladolid, Huerta, Spain*

Reformatory and asylum now under the control of the state office for protection of minorities. Students: 100. Staff: 9 Brothers, 13 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: originally by the Capuchins; the Brothers administered the establishment from 1961 to 1975. Supported by the state.

## **Switzerland**

### **St. George Youth Village**

*Bad Knutwil, Switzerland*

Custodial care and education of delinquents and dropouts. Students: 80. Founded: 1930, by the Brothers of the District of Germany; recently passed completely to lay control. Supported by the state.

### **Fraternité de La Salle**

*Schwanendigenstrasse, 80, 8050 Zurich, Switzerland*

A residential and counseling program for young runaways and drug addicts conducted in the Schlupfhuus of Zurich. Participants: about 300 per year. Staff: 1 Brother, 8 lay people. Supported by the Canton of Zurich.

## **NEAR EAST**

### **Israel**

#### **Ecole des Frères**

*Nazareth, B.P. 30, 16100 Nazareth, Israel*

Elementary school for delinquents 12 to 14 years of age, with technical training in carpentry, electricity, construction, and iron work. Students: 70. Staff: 4 Brothers, 30 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1961. Supported by the government of Israel and benefactors.

## **FAR EAST**

### **India**

#### **St. Pius X Boys' Town**

*Nagamalai, Madurai 625019, South India*

Technical school for destitute children. Students: 161. Term: 4 years. Staff: 5 Brothers, 9 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1961. Supported by the Institute, Action Aid, and local resources.

**St. Joseph's Boys' Village**

*Ganguwarpatti, Periyakulam Taluok, Madurai, 624203, South India*

Home for orphans and destitute children. Students: 200. Term: 6 years. Staff: 2 Brothers, 10 lay people. Founded: 1975. Supported by sponsorships and donations.

## Japan

**La Salle Home**

*6-12-1 Higashi-Sendai, Sendai-Shi Japan 983*

Home for boys from 6 to 16 (orphans, or from disrupted families); boys attend public schools. Students: 80. Staff: 2 Brothers, 20 lay people, 1 Sister. Founded: 1948. Supported by the government.

## Sri Lanka

**Sri Lanka Technical Institute and Diyagala Boys' Town**

*Tewate, Ragama, Sri Lanka*

School for underprivileged youth (orphans, poor children from broken families) in agriculture, technology, printing, animal husbandry, paddy cultivation. Students: 407. Staff: 9 Brothers, 43 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: April 30, 1963. Supported by self-generated income and donations.

**Nuwara Eliya Agro Training Centre**

*Nazareth Retreat, Lady McCallum's Drive, Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka*

School for underprivileged youth in agriculture and in animal husbandry. A six-month residential program. Students: 65. Staff: 2 Brothers, 6 lay people. Founded: 1969. Supported by self-generated income and donations.

**St. Anthony's Farm Agro-Training Centre**

*Puliyankulama, Pallama, Sri Lanka*

School for underprivileged youth in agriculture, mainly paddy cultivation. A four-year residential program. Students: 72. Staff: 2 Brothers, 8 lay people. Supported by self-generated income and donations.

**Diyagala Boys' Town School of Printing for Handicapped Boys**

*383, K. Cyril C. Perera Mawatha, Kotabena, Colombo, 13, Sri Lanka*

Printer's school for the underprivileged children and the handicapped. Students: 35. Staff: 2 Brothers, 3 lay people. Founded: 1985. Supported by self-generated income and donations.

## Thailand

**La Salle Chotiravi Nakhonsawan**

*18 Kosya Road, Nakhon-sawan, 60000 Thailand*

1) Miguel House: a home for young male and female students who receive free

room and board and scholarships at La Salle School. Students: 400. Staff: 5 Brothers, 145 lay people. Founded 1953. Supported by the La Salle Christian School, a local tuition school.

- 2) La Salle House: a home for children who are orphaned or abandoned. Students: 10. Staff: 1 Brother, 1 lay person. Founded: 1985. Supported by the La Salle Christian School.

## Philippines

### Holy Rosary College

*Tala Leprosarium, Novaliches, Rizal, Philippines*

A secondary school and a teachers' college in the leper colony. Students: 300 in secondary school, 160 in teachers' college. Staff: 3 Brothers, 10 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1951 by Dominicans; Brothers joined the existing institution in 1984. Supported by the Holy Rosary Foundation and the Brothers' Provincialate.

## AUSTRALIA

### Boys' Town

*Beaudesert, Queensland, Australia*

Rehabilitation center for delinquent boys, ages 13 to 18 years. Students: 85. Staff: 7 Brothers, 10 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1960. Supported by the government and benefactors.

### San Miguel Family Life Centre

*Kurmond Road, North Richmond, NSW, Australia*

Vocational training in typing, welding, etc. Temporary accommodation for one or two parent families. Students: each year 2 groups of 25 students, for six-month terms. Families: 14 Family Groups for 2 to 3 months terms. Staff: 2 Brothers, 6 lay people, 2 Sisters. Founded: 1980. Supported by the government, benefactors, and Brothers of the District of Australia.

In planning: a youth-in-crisis accommodation center in Melbourne.

## CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA

### West Indies

#### St. John Bosco Children's Home

*Hatfield, P.O., Manchester, Jamaica, W.I.*

Boarding school and remedial education for abandoned, orphaned, neglected delinquent boys between the ages of 8 to 17. Students: 135. Term: Average 3 years.

Staff: 2 Brothers, 23 lay people, 2 Sisters. Founded: 1960. Supported by the government (60%) and self-generated income.

## El Salvador

### **COAR (Oscar Arnulfo Romero Community)**

*Villa de Zaragoza, Departamento de la Libertad, El Salvador, C.A.*

Residential school for orphans of the revolution and troubled children in El Salvador. Students: 280. Staff: 4 Brothers, 12 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1980. Supported by private donations, mostly from the U.S.A.

## Guatemala

### **Residencia Hermano Miguel**

*Liceo La Salle, Apdo. 9, Chiquimula, Guatemala, C.A.*

School for Campesino and Indian youth; leadership training. Students: 40. Staff: 1 Brother (full-time) and 1 Brother (part-time) Founded: January, 1981. Supported by donations from the San Francisco District, other U. S. Districts, many individual Brothers and donors.

### **Mother Mirian Simons Institute**

*El Estor, Izabal, Guatemala, C.A.*

School for rural Indian youths. Students: 150. Staff: 3 Brothers, 8 lay people. Founded: in 1984 the Brothers assumed administration of an existing work. Supported by tuition and by donations from the Claretian Fathers Foundation (U.S.A.).

### **Brother James Miller Indian House**

*Huehuetenango, Guatemala, C.A.*

A boarding facility for Indian education and leadership training, along with programs of self-support. Students: 150. Term: 3 or 6 years. Staff: 3 Brothers, 5 lay people. Founded: 1975. Supported by the District of Chicago and other U.S. Districts.

### **Brother James Miller La Salle Indian Center**

*Apdo. 17 B Guatemala City, Guatemala, C.A.*

Academic and vocational school for Indian youth; leadership opportunity and work experience. Students: 200. Staff: 4 Brothers, 10 lay people. Founded: 1956; Brothers arrived in 1966. Supported by private donations; self-supporting in part.

## Mexico

### **Internado Infantil Guadalupano, A.C. (Hogar Colectivo #4)**

*Reforma 471, Col. Loma Estrella, Ixtapalapa 09850 Mexico, D.F.*

Residential technical school for disadvantaged or delinquent boys; free tuition for

primary and intermediate grades. Students: 140. Staff: 3 Brothers, 8 lay people, 4 Sisters. Founded: 1960. Supported by the municipality, gifts of former students, and the Brothers of the District.

#### **Guadalupano Boys' Academy**

*Manzano 34, Col. Florida, 01030 Mexico 20, D.F.*

School for abandoned or delinquent youth. Students: 125. Staff: 3 Brothers, 6 lay people. Founded: 1960. Brothers took charge in 1984.

#### **Colegio Ciudad de Los Niños, A.C.**

*28 Sur y 33 Oriente, 72100 Puebla, Pue, Mexico*

School for the sons of laborers and artisans. Students: 980. Staff: 2 Brothers, 52 lay people; 1 priest. Founded: 1953. Supported by the Brothers of the District and the cooperation and effort of parents.

## **NORTH AMERICA**

### **Canada**

#### **St. Joseph School**

*Alfred, Ontario, Canada*

School for court-committed youth. Students: 120 to 150. Staff: 27 Brothers, 30 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1932. Brothers withdrew in 1975. Supported by the state.

#### **REVDEC (Rève pour Decrocheurs)**

*1475 Boulevard Morgan, Montreal, Québec, Canada H1V 2P6*

School for academic reorientation of dropouts now in various difficulties. Students: 20, with expectation of rapid increase. Length of stay: 2 to 6 months. Staff: 1 Brother, 5 lay people. Founded: 1985, following several years of informal work. Supported by private foundation and by Brothers of the Montreal District.

#### **Le Transit**

*409 Avenue Gamache, Sept-Iles, Québec, Canada G4R 2H8*

Temporary residence and counseling for runaways, vagrants, disturbed youth. Students: in residence 12; others placed with families. Founded: 1980. Supported by the Brothers of the District of Quebec, Knights of Columbus, the city, and region.

#### **Mont Ville-Neuve**

*St. Ferdinand. Frontenac, Québec, Canada G0N 1N0*

Residential school for delinquents committed by the state. Students: 60. Staff: 8 Brothers, 25 lay people. Founded: 1943; closed 1978. Supported by the Quebec Government.

**St. John Bosco Institute**

*2160 Chemin Ste-Foy, Québec, Canada G1V 1X1*

Residential school for orphans, predelinquents, troubled or homeless youth. Students: 200. Staff: 36 Brothers, 10 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1927; Brothers withdrew 1970; closed 1974. Supported by the government of Quebec.

**Special Family Services Center (Foyer Deschambault)**

*962 Rue Deschambault, St. Jerome, Quebec, Canada J7Z 5T5*

Center for family services, youth counseling as alternatives to institutionalization. Students: in residence 15, ages 13 to 18. Staff: 4 Brothers, 1 lay person. Founded: 1976; closed 1982. Supported by the state and by contributions from the Brothers.

**Center for Harmonious Education**

*3815 Avenue Severin, Three Rivers, Quebec, Canada G8Y 5E9*

Dropouts, youth disturbed and otherwise unprepared for employment and independent living. School and residence for oriental youths. Students: 30 to 40. Staff: 8 Brothers, 4 lay people. Founded: 1984. Supported by the District of Three Rivers.

**St. John's School**

*Uxbridge, Ontario, Canada L0C 1K0*

School for delinquents and maladjusted youth with emotional and/or behavioral handicaps, committed by authorities. Students: 40 residents. Term: 9 months. Staff: 6 Brothers, 10 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: about 1880. Supported by the government of Ontario.

## United States

**Journey House**

*1730 Asbury Drive, Pasadena, CA 91104*

Residential and counseling center for students referred by the Courts as an alternative to incarceration. They attend a local school and work toward rehabilitation and reconciliation with their families. Students: 4 (plan to take 6). Term: 1 to 2 years. Staff: 1 Brother, 3 lay people, 1 Sister. Founded: 1985. Supported by the lay Board of Directors.

**Mercy Boys Home**

*1140 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, IL 60607*

Residential care of boys, ages 15 to 19 who are unable to live at home; school or employment required. Students: 75. Term: 1 to 4 years. Staff: 4 Brothers, 10 lay people, 1 priest. Founded: 1887. Supported by private donations.

**Christian Brothers Academy**

*1322 Moss Street, New Orleans, LA 70119*

School for slow learners. Students: 32. Term: 1 to 2 years. Staff: 6 Brothers. Founded: 1977. Supported by tuition fees.

**Martin de Porres School***136–35 218th Street, Springfield Gardens, NY 11413*

Residential school for special education students, ages 9 to 21; emotionally handicapped, socially maladjusted; vocational and life-skills education. Students: 90. Term: 5 years. Staff: 5 Brothers, 35 lay people. Founded: 1972. Supported by New York State Education Department.

**Martin de Porres Group Homes, Inc., Administrative Offices***136–25 218th Street, Springfield Gardens, NY 11413*

Residential programs for youngsters aged 9 to 16 from disrupted families; independent living program for young men 16 to 21. Students: 14. Staff: 3 Brothers, 6 lay people, 1 Sister. Founded: 1974. Supported by New York State Department of Social Services.

**Highbridge Community Life Center***979 Ogden Avenue, Bronx, NY*

Community-based center providing free adult education, family counseling, and medical services in one of the poorest districts of the country. Students: 250. Staff: 2 Brothers; 25 lay people. Founded: 1978. Supported by funds from New York City, New York State, and private foundations.

**Melrose-Bronx***365 E. 150th Street, Bronx, NY 10455*

Religious community living among the poor of the South Bronx; giving Christian example, food, and counseling to neighbors. Students: number varies; all ages and racial groups. Staff: 4 Brothers, 1 volunteer. Founded: 1979. Supported by the salary of the members of Brothers' Community and volunteers.

**De La Salle-in-Towne***25 So. Van Pelt Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103*

Delinquent rehabilitation center, day treatment; strong in special education for the learning disabled. Students: 96. Term: 11 months. Staff: 2 Brothers, 30 lay people. Founded: September 1972. Supported by the State of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the Department of Education.

**De La Salle Vocational***State Road and Bristol Pike, Bensalem, PA 19020*

Day treatment center for juvenile delinquents: academic, vocational, job placement, and counseling. Social work. Students: 120. Term: 8 months to 3 years. Staff: 1 Brother, 45 lay people. Founded: 1975. Supported by state, city, and church agencies.

**Ocean Tides***635 Ocean Road, Narragansett, RI 02882*

Court-adjudicated delinquent boys in residential setting including school and family therapy. Students: 38 residential, 60 nonresidential. Term: 1 year. Staff: 9 Brothers, 32 lay people. Founded: 1975. Supported by the State of Rhode Island.

**LaSalle School**

*391 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12203*

Certified Special Education Center, with junior and senior high schools; residence, group homes, day- and after-care. Boys 12-18 placed by courts or families for home or community difficulties. 150 students in all units. Staff: 11 Brothers, 65 lay persons. State supported. Founded 1854.

**St. Gabriel's Hall**

*Box 13, Audubon, PA 19407*

A special education center for court committed young men from counties of southeastern Pennsylvania. Students: 220. Term: 10 to 13 months. Staff: 13 Brothers, 227 lay people, 2 Sisters, 1 priest. Founded: 1895. Supported by state, county and church agencies.

**De La Salle Education Center**

*3732 Paseo Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64109*

A private, nonsectarian center for troubled students who have been unsuccessful in previous schools; remedial, academic, and vocational; counseling and referral services; 420 male and female, mostly from the inner city. Students are referred by juvenile authorities, school officers, or families.

The following child-care institutions formerly staffed by the Brothers in North America have closed, or are no longer under the aegis of the Brothers:

The Catholic Male Orphanage (Hillside School), Troy, NY 1850-1950. New York Catholic Protectory, Bronx, NY 1863-1938. Lincoln Hall, Lincolndale, NY 1907-1980. Boys' Town, Omaha, NE; 1938-1944. St. Patrick's Home, Halifax, Nova Scotia 1885-1960. St. Mary's Asylum, Syracuse, NY 1867-1870. Boland Farm School, Peekskill, NY 1876-1880's. St. Vincent's, Amboy, NJ 1877-1924. St. Vincent's, Baltimore, MD 1849-1898. St. Emma's, Belmead, VA 1898-1924. Bridgeport Orphanage, Chicago, IL 1863-1882. St. Mary's Training School, Feehanville, IL 1882-1906. Carondelet Orphanage, St. Louis, MO 1859-1866. Catholic Protectorate, Glencoe, MO 1872-1885. St. John's Indian School, Gray-Horse, OK 1907-1913. St. Vincent's, San Rafael, CA 1894-1922.

## SOUTH AMERICA

### Argentina

**The Francisco Bellini Agricultural and Technical Institute**

*Claypole, Buenos Aires, Argentina*

A residential school for abandoned, homeless boys 6 to 18, with preparation in the various trades (farming, carpentry, metalwork, etc.), prior to entering the army, as required at 18. Students: 200. Staff: 6 Brothers, 45 lay people. Supported by the Society of the Divine Infant (PEDELAI).

## Bolivia

### The José Mercado Aguado Institute

*Calle Mõns Salvatierra 58, Castilla 179, Santa Cruz, Bolivia*

Residential school providing basic and vocational education (printing, auto mechanics, plumbing, electricity, carpentry) for orphans, who enter at a very early age and leave at 18. Students: 130. Staff: 5 Brothers, 18 lay people, parish clergy. Supported by gifts and a Foundation, income from the shops, some government assistance.

## Brazil

### St. Anthony's School

*Rue da República, 801, Porto Alegre 90050, Brazil*

Orphanage, free school, trade school for children of laborers and the poor. Students: boarders, 208; day pupils, 683. Term: 5 years. Staff: 11 Brothers, 1 priest. Founded: 1985. Supported by donations, the products of the shops, and fees from day students.

### La Salle Agricultural Institute

*Corrego Aguas Claras, C.P. 40-0051, 72001 Taguatinga, DF, Brazil*

Boarding school for poor children and orphans. Students: 100. Staff: 5 Brothers, 7 lay people. Supported by the Mission Fund of Germany, the government, and products of the farm.

## Peru

### Youth Home

*Avenue los Descalzos, Rimac, Lima, Peru*

School for delinquents, ages 12 to 16; basic education and trades. Students: 180. Staff: 4 Brothers. Founded: 1938; closed 1969. Supported by the government, products of the shops, and donations.

### Boys' Academy

*Avenue Costanera, San Miguel, Lima, Peru*

Residential education and training for delinquents, ages 16 to 21. Students: 365. Staff: 4 Brothers. Founded: 1932; now closed. Supported by the state, products of the shops, gifts, and donations.



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**Brother Othmar Würth, FSC**, was born in Switzerland in 1934. He has devoted most of his teaching career to helping students who suffer from learning disabilities. His graduate work at the University of Fribourg included studies in special education and psychology. As superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Switzerland, he strongly supported the foundation of a therapeutic community for drug addicts and served on the staff of that community for two years. Later he was a member of the staff of the Schulpfhuus of Zurich, a refuge used to house young runaways and to provide a counseling service to help youngsters and their parents deal with the problems which underlie drug addiction. Currently, he is working at the mission of the Christian Brothers in Rwanda, East Africa.

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