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Lasallian Education: Which Kind of Education is It?

EDGARD HENGEMÜLE, FSC

Translated by Rose M. Beal, PhD

Foreword by Edgar Genuíno Nicodem, FSC

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Foreword

By Edgar Genuíno Nicodem, FSC

Brother Edgard Hengemüle, in the year 2000, made us the gift of the text, *La Salle: A Reading of Readings*, in which he presented to us a broad panorama and a critical analysis of what historians of education and of pedagogy have to say about the patron saint of educators.

Now he gives us *Lasallian Education: Which Kind of Education Is It?*, a book in which he offers us his personal synthesis of the essence of the characteristics of education as De La Salle conceived and practiced it with the co-founders of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

This work is the fruit of decades of study and development by Brother Edgard as part of his duties as teacher of Lasallian spirituality and pedagogy in the houses of formation of the future Lasallian Brothers and as director of courses for the Brothers and their lay collaborators in the Lasallian work in Brazil and beyond.

To discover and develop these identifying lines of the Lasallian educational style, the author takes into account the reports of the biographers, above all those chronologically closest to De La Salle, explores at length the body of texts left by De La Salle, and draws on the writings of other commentators on Lasallian thought and educational practice.

As teacher of the history of education and with the knowledge that he has, above all, of the historical reality of 17th-century France, Brother Edgard helps us greatly to be able to understand with greater objectivity the teaching, the position, the choices and the educational practices of De La Salle within his context, particularly the social and cultural context.

The material referring to the nine distinct and complementary facets that, according to the vision of the author, identify Lasallian education, is presented by him in an eminently teachable form and in clear, fluent, and, at times, even colloquial, language.

I have no doubt that this work, both dense and accessible at the same time, will come to be one of the references for those who want, from here forward, to study the pedagogical thought of and to bring into effect in a fundamental way De La Salle's educational experience.

I make mine the invitation/challenge that Brother Edgard makes to each of us, that we be inspired by De La Salle, such that, clearer about what the marks of Lasallian education are according to its origins, we, in association, enter into the task of giving it flesh in our time and our spheres of activity.

—Edgar Genuíno Nicodem, FSC

Introduction

John Baptist de La Salle was a native of Rheims, the capital of Champagne, in France. He was born on April 30, 1651. His father was a magistrate, a cultured man of the bourgeoisie. His mother belonged to a noble family, also of magistrates.

At around ten years of age, De La Salle showed the desire to pursue the priestly life. By the time he was sixteen, he held the title, the obligations, and the income of the canon of the cathedral of Rheims. In 1670, he began to attend the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, in Paris. With the death of his mother and father, in 1671 and 1672, he had to leave this center of ecclesiastical formation to take on the responsibility of raising his brothers and sisters, since he was the first-born of the family. But this did not cause him to set aside the studies and preparation for the priestly life, which he completed in the city of his birth. He achieved his doctorate of theology and was ordained as a priest at the age of twenty-seven. However, he neither led a parish, nor reached the possible heights of an ecclesiastical career, because his life was taking another direction, just as Saint Paul's had.

Canon Roland, his friend and advisor, had founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus of Rheims for the education of poor young girls in that city, albeit without official approval. De La Salle secured legal recognition of the Sisters from the local authorities and the king. It was his first significant involvement in the world of religious life and education.

In March 1679, a teacher named Adrian Nyel came to Rheims. He brought a letter from a Mme. Maillefer, a native of Rheims living in Rouen, asking De La Salle to contribute to the opening of schools for the poor young boys of her native city. De La Salle gave lodging to the new arrival in his house. He accompanied Nyel and helped him in the opening of a school. This was followed by others in the city. Nyel, more entrepreneur than financier, began to initiate new projects in other cities before ensuring the firm foundation of the first ones and taking care of the schoolmasters that he had hired for them.

Without having wished or planned to do so, De La Salle was taking care of these schoolmasters and was committing himself in an increasingly total way: he began renting a house for them near his family's house. Later he housed these humble men in his own residence, first during the day and subsequently at night as well. Under criticism from his relatives, he and the schoolmasters left his family mansion and went to reside together in another house, also rented. Convinced that his mission was to take charge of the schools and particularly of the schoolmasters in order to take care of them, De La Salle renounced his position as canon in order to give himself entirely to the formation of the schoolmasters and the direction of the schools. In 1684, he took advantage of a time of hunger caused by a terrible famine to sell his possessions and, with the money from the sale, to buy and to distribute food to the poor.

Committed in an unforeseen and, according to his writings, providential way to education and having taken on the lifestyle of his schoolmasters, De La Salle was establishing the outlines, with them, of a new type of religious institute in the Church, an original congregation, constituted entirely of lay religious¹ dedicated exclusively to education: the Brothers of the Christian Schools, today better known as the Lasallian Brothers. With them, he designed and lived an educational project marked by its time, but also with new qualities.

In 1900, Pope Leo XIII canonized De La Salle, naming him one of the saints of the Catholic Church. Consideration of his educational and pedagogical work and the way in which he accomplished it led Pope Pius XII

to proclaim him, in 1950, patron saint of Christian educators, both those who are already teachers and those who are preparing to teach.

Historians of education see De La Salle as contributing, through the various educational fronts on which he was active and through the religious Institute that he founded, to spreading teaching among the common classes, to the definition of the subject matter and the adoption of methods of teaching used in elementary schools, to attention to the reality of the student, to establishing a certain style of educational relationships, to appropriate administration of teaching and to dignifying and preparing teachers.

Anyone who examines the texts addressing the thought and the work of pedagogues and educators from various times and places will notice a general commonality concerning what informed them and unanimity in the judgments regarding who they were, what they thought, felt and did. In some cases, there is greater disagreement over the data and the points of view expressed. In the case of the pedagogue and educator John Baptist de La Salle, there are differences in not a few of the data presented and disagreements, even contradictions, in the way the data are read.

It is not a question of examining here the reasons why such differences or contradictions occur, an examination already undertaken elsewhere.² What is certain is that, in the texts of the history of education and pedagogy, along with all the correct information regarding De La Salle, there are found names, dates and facts that are not consistent with what biographers of the founder of the Christian Schools assert.³ There are reductionist views which focus only on particular angles of reality, marginalizing, intentionally or due to a lack of understanding, other facets which would give this same reality a more global, objective and even different view. Erroneous interpretations of words or expressions in use during the era of the creator of the Normal School, or used by him, are found. The intentions with which his initiatives were undertaken are unknown or distorted. Or, depending on the case, innovations are attributed to De La Salle that are not his, or he is denied achievements that were his, or subject matter and school routines are demanded of him that are simply unthinkable in his time.

Today, spread across all the continents of the world, approximately 80,000 educators take inspiration from the practices lived and above all the principles defended during the early years of the Lasallian work. It is normal that, amongst them, the most spontaneous inclination would be to give John Baptist de La Salle an eminently positive reading and to attribute to him ideas and, above all, practices which could only have developed and become a reality later, even much later.

The most important thing in this is that these men and women educators want, with greater or lesser intensity, to carry out appropriately in today's world the original intuitions of De La Salle. But to do that authentically one cannot begin with what one thinks De La Salle thought or did or what one would like him to have thought or have done. It is necessary to try to know, to the extent that history allows, what his creative intuitions were and how he instantiated them in the conditions of his time. It is necessary to know, as precisely as possible, what he truly understood education to mean, with what end he practiced it, to whom he directed it, how he characterized it, and with what measures he brought it about.

Responding to all these questions is a task that exceeds the aspirations of the present text. In it, obviously, elements that help to clarify these various points will be touched upon. But what it intends to do is to respond with a certain breadth to the question referring to what effectively characterized the education thought and practiced by De La Salle more than three hundred years ago.

Education is strongly linked to the world of the social sciences. One of the key words for appropriately approaching that world is *understanding*. And to understand an historical personage of the past, such as De La Salle, an institute, such as his Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, an activity, such as his educational ministries, or a written work, such as his *Conduct of the Christian Schools*,⁴ it is fundamental to know and to be attentive to the context in which this person and this institution were born, this activity was developed, this ministry was undertaken. Moreover, it is necessary to be well-informed and remain attentive to a double context: the external, constituted by the political, social, economic and cultural milieu in which these realities are situated, and the internal, referring in particular to the person studied and formed by his way of being, by his physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics, by his family and academic/professional formation, the state of life and the activities he chose, the existential experiences that mark him, the variety of facets of his thought and the ways in which he expressed that thought.

Without knowledge of and attention to this double context, it is impossible to understand De La Salle in 17th-century France, or Dante in 13th-century Italy, Cervantes in 16th-century Spain, or Paulo Freire in 20th-century Brazil and the Third World. Trying to approach someone or something from the past without meeting this requirement opens one to the risk of error due to anachronism – an error to which one normally succumbs.

The desire to help understanding, to avoid judging the realities of the Lasallian era according to the view, sensibility and techno-scientific experience of the 21st century explains the frequent reference to the context of the 17th century throughout the various chapters of this book and the more extensive development of it at the beginning of each chapter.

De La Salle wrote no text that deals expressly and systematically with the characteristics of education as he understood it and practiced it. Such characteristics, however, can easily and clearly be observed first in the works of those who, writing about De La Salle's life, inevitably had to address the variety and the details that identified the education that he recommended and offered. Thus, along with attention to the Lasallian context, one tries to follow closely the biographers' writings about Lasallian life and education, above all those who knew De La Salle personally, first among them, Canon Jean-Baptiste Blain.

But, for knowledge and understanding of De La Salle's educational activity and thought, his own words, scattered but frequent, across his writings, are more important than the placing of them in their context and the reports of the biographers. Hence the concern in the present text to put the reader as much as possible in contact with De La Salle's original thought. This explains the intentional and even excessive presence of direct quotations taken from De La Salle's writings.

The extensive and detailed codification of the specific educational tasks in the day-to-day life of the Lasallian school is found specifically in the classic of modern pedagogy, the *Conduct of the Christian Schools* (GE). It is no wonder, therefore, that in the pages that follow, the text most copiously cited is this Lasallian didactic-pedagogical manual.

But De La Salle's vision of what education should be and the way in which he instantiated it was also present in almost all of his other texts. Next to the *Conduct*, the *Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* (RU) holds an important place. Several of his catechisms were intended for the preparation of the schoolmasters or for study by students: *The Duties of a Christian to God* (DA), the same *Duties* (DB) given in question and answer form, and also summarized in two pamphlets, the *Minor Compendium* (C1) and the *Major Compendium* (C2). He completed these catechisms with two others on the liturgy: *The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obligated to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So* (DC) and *Instructions and Prayers for Holy Mass, Confession, and Communion* (I). He also drafted *Exercises of Piety to Be Performed during the Day in the Christian Schools* (E) for use in the schools. Other texts, intended primarily as food for the spiritual life of his teachers, also included pedagogical and catechetical elements. These include: *Meditations for All the Sundays of the Year* (MD), *Meditations for the Principal Feasts of the Year* (MF), *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* (MR), the *Common Rules* (RC), *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer* (EMO), and the *Collection of Various Short Treatises* (CT). Likewise, his *Letters* (C) and the minor texts such as *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself* (RI), or his historical texts, such as *Memorandum on the Habit* (MH) and the *Memorandum on the French Language* (MLF), offer worthy elements on Lasallian education and the Institute of which he was in charge.

Finally, to help with understanding Lasallian educational thought and practice, readers are also offered elements of the research, observations and reflections especially of the authors closest geographically and culturally to De La Salle, such as Michel Sauvage, Miguel Campos, Michel Fiévet, Léon Lauraire, Nicolas Capelle, Jean Pungier and, above all, Yves Poutet in his various works and primarily in his massive and substantial thesis, *The 17th Century and Lasallian Origins*. If authors writing in Portuguese and Spanish, such as Saturnino Gallego, Josafat Alcalde, Pedro Chico, Henrique Justo, Bruno Alpago, Santiago Mancini, Alfredo Morales, etc. are barely present or even absent, it is because the literature in these languages is more accessible to most of us.⁵

The hope is that those who read and study this text might, with it, be able to extend their understanding and comprehension of education as De La Salle dreamed of and directed it, and be able to discover, as well, aspects not always emphasized, such as the social dimension of the Lasallian school, the various ways De La Salle expressed what today we call integral education, and the richness of the relationship between the Lasallian school

and the families of its students. Additionally, it helped that the details brought to light might equally contribute to more people being in a position to dispute the mistaken or distorted readings of what characterized education for De La Salle, spreading the most objective image possible of Lasallian education and, above all, inspire carrying out the educational mission with greater clarity regarding the patron saint of educators.

Along these lines, this text definitely has a strong historical flavor, in the academic sense of addressing and trying to help the understanding of education as it was characterized by John Baptist de La Salle. But its intention is historical in another sense: that in which history is something that does not happen spontaneously, but which is made, created by the action of rational beings, free and creative. Just as De La Salle and his co-founders lived a history of education and made history by making education, the intention of this book is to help those who continue De La Salle's work more than three hundred years later be able to live and creatively make education in and for the current day, faithful at the same time both to the founding Lasallian intentions and the demands of the 21st century, taking advantage of the scientific and technical resources which De La Salle did not have in his time. Who is preparing themselves for this common work, which was De La Salle's and is today Lasallian?

Universal Education

1

Contextual Elements

Access by the Poor to Education

In modernity, what N6voa called “civilization through education” continues to prevail, initiated in the 16th and following centuries, according to which all people, regardless of their conditions of origin, progressively have achieved access to formal education.

Seventeenth-century France was essentially an agricultural country. Eighty-five percent of its inhabitants lived in a rural area. In this predominantly rural reality, and at a time in which there was no concern for protecting children from child labor, each child represented a hand, if not large, still precious, for work. From the age of seven, the young child began to be busy with agro-pastoral work, such as watching the animals.

In this context, in many areas in the interior of France, there was no school. At times, a teacher would go to meet with the children who guarded the livestock to give them some rudiments of instruction. In other cases, there was a type of family rural school: some member of the family who had some introduction to reading and writing passed on what he knew to the other members. In both the country and the cities, the poor who wanted to had access to learning the basic elements of knowledge in the Charity Schools, linked to the parishes and functioning under the authority of the parish officials.

Over time, schools conducted by male and female religious institutes increased what they offered and effectively offered gratuitous instruction to the most needy: Father Barr6’s Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus; Canon Roland’s Sisters; Saint Francis de Sales’ Sisters of the Visitation; Saint Peter Fourier’s Sisters of Notre Dame, etc.

Doctrine and Practice

For Bluche, in France, “the 17th century was the century of education ... Under Louis XIV (whose personal governance corresponded practically to the years of De La Salle’s life) education became general and democratized itself.”⁶ According to Viguerie, “the *Grand Si6cle* had an original doctrine of teaching: a doctrine of the school for all and gratuitous for the poor.”⁷ During this century, obligatory attendance at school was legally established. By declaration on December 13, 1698, the king prohibited the employment of children under fourteen years of age, above all the new Catholics,⁸ precisely so that they could go to school.

But if schooling was theoretically obligatory, it remained minimal in practice. There was resistance from various quarters that made difficult and even impeded its taking root. In the first place, there was opposition from the parents to this implementation, for various reasons. Among them, many were not aware of the importance and necessity of sending their children to school, which they themselves had not attended. For example, in 1670, the wine makers of the diocese of Rheims showed themselves particularly reluctant to sending their children to school. As strange as this might seem today, there was veiled opposition, though not explicit, even in higher

circles to the generalization of instruction and, above all, to raising the level of academic content beyond the basic rudiments for the popular class. Even the monarchy did not escape this. On the one hand, it supported the creation of elementary schools but, on the other, with regard to higher level schools, that is, the colleges, it constantly expressed its willingness that their number be limited.

Why was there this contradiction between the generalization of instruction and the level it could reach amongst the poor? First, to avoid the risk of upsetting the social structure, of committing an outrage against the sacrosanct social balance, in order to maintain the inequality faithfully held in the *Grand Siècle*. Richelieu is generally taken as the spokesperson for those who were unsettled by this question. It was he who, even before Louis' government, set forth clearly this point of view in his *Political Testament*, written in 1642:

It is certain that a knowledge of letters is absolutely necessary to a republic.

But it is also certain that they [letters] should not be taught indiscriminately to all.

In the same way as a body with eyes in every part would be monstrous, so too would be the State if all its members were educated. Pride and presumptions would be commonplace, and disobedience would be proportional to them. Knowledge would fill France with controversies, more suitable for ruining families and disturbing the public peace than for contributing to the essential good of the State.⁹

Secondly, the effort to generalize instruction also met reluctance from the defenders of mercantilism,¹⁰ beginning with Colbert, Secretary of State and a State protector and centralist. According to Richelieu's *Political Testament*: "Interest in letters would undermine completely interest in trade, which is what fills States with wealth."

In the same *Testament*, a third argument appears: excess in the spread and deepening of studies would ruin agriculture, which was truly the hand that feeds the poor. And a fourth: "Indiscriminant study would, in little time, drain the supply of soldiers, who are prepared better by the incivility of ignorance than in the politesse of knowledge."

Some years after the famous minister of Louis XIII wrote this text, a deliberation by the Council of the city of Rennes summarized in a different form, but essentially with the same bases, the argument against generalized instruction:

Therefore, the usefulness of establishing a public school boils down to teaching the children of the poor artisans to read and write. This is to strike a mortal blow to civil commerce and the political order that it supports: the children go to learn to read and write during the time in which they could be carrying out a much more useful apprenticeship into the profession of their father. Knowing how to read and write, they lose their liking for mechanical trades and want, thanks to this false education, to raise themselves to a more honorable state. The arts and the trades decline due to a shortage of people employed in them, the lands due to a scarcity of farmers. Moreover, is there not room to fear that this path will shine a light on the portion of the population carrying society's heaviest burdens and on the inequity of their situation?¹¹

Even at the end of the 18th century, there were priests hostile to instruction, even at the elementary level. They thought it good to cultivate a "holy ignorance," prescribed by some of the religious orders for some of the people employed in the domestic service of the order. The pastor François-Léon Réguis could be their spokesperson: "The most simple, the most innocent, the most Christian (in the parishes) do not know how to read or to write."¹² And the vigilant and zealous pastor added: The ability to read opens them to evil books, which, in turn, "brings to the lowest people their greatest fears, that they are taught to disbelieve everything, not to respect anything in their life, as though they have nothing to hope for nor to fear after death."¹³

Administrators of the French provinces were in agreement with all these critics, even just a few years before the Revolution. In 1764, the statement by Granet, a high-level functionary in Toulon, gave the tone and the argument, citing Mandeville, according to whom, in the final analysis, "to become a happy society, it is necessary that many of its members be at the same time ignorant and poor."¹⁴

But the strangest thing is that even some among the champions of the so-called “lights” spoke, vehemently at times, against the education of the popular classes, as did La Chalotais: “The good of society demands that the knowledge of the people not surpass that which is necessary for their work. Each man who looks beyond his sad trade will not dedicate himself to it with diligence and patience.” Or, as Voltaire himself had it, supporting his colleague: “I thank him for prohibiting the laborers from study. It is more convenient that the people be guided than that they be instructed; they are not worthy of it.”

Motivations and Proposals

And those who promoted instruction for the common people, why and for what purpose did they promote it? Certainly there were those who did it for “noble” motives and intentions: the redemption of people; the cultural and social elevation of the poor, etc. But there were various other interests in play, especially **religious, social** and **economic**.

The schools were a weapon in the **religious** battle between Catholics and Protestants. The previously mentioned royal declaration of December 13, 1698, renewed on May 14, 1724, requiring the existence of a school in all parishes and requiring that they be attended by children until the age of 14 had, at its base, the goal of religious proselytizing: the “Catholicization” of Protestants. In another realm, Jesuits and Jansenists battled for influence over the youth with a view to the ideological domination of society: the one who has the youth, has the future.

Yves Poutet emphasized the existence of this religious motivation and added to it another of a **social** character: education was also promoted by the interest of “cleansing” society of one of the dangers that threatened it:

When the commissioners of the cities, the clergy, the nobility, the Third Estate addressed the question of schooling, between 1679 (the year in which De La Salle began his educational work) and 1719 (the year of his death), the issues that merited their attention and justified the subsidies approved (for instruction) dealt with the “Catholicization” of Protestants and the (elimination) of the vagrancy and idleness (unemployment) of the poor.¹⁵

The decree by Louis XIV dated June 1670 officially establishing the shelter for abandoned children serves as an example of the **economic** interest that also underpinned the incentive for education. This text says that the creation of such a work would be advantageous because some children amongst those educated could become soldiers and serve in the military, and others could become workers, or colonists “of the lands which we establish for the commercial benefit of our kingdom.”¹⁶

Along this economic line also come the arguments that the Canon Charles Démié made to the aldermen of Lyon in order to convince them to continue their crusade for the education of the city’s poor and to allot funds for it: without gratuitous schools, the poor acquired habits of idleness, which were very prejudicial to professional life. Knowing how to read, to write and to do arithmetic was becoming necessary to carry out an honorable profession. The gratuitous schools should play the part of employment agencies in which the various and developing “industries” could find the manpower they needed.¹⁷

De La Salle and Universal Education

More than three hundred years ago, De La Salle advocated for and practiced universal education. With what motivation? His formation in the cultural context in which he lived would neither allow him to speak of education as a human right, an anthropological requirement out of respect for human dignity and the global development of the human person, nor as a social right of the citizen, imperative to their inclusion in society.

Within the conceptual framework and language of his time, he saw and appreciated education in light of the Christian faith, that is, as a necessity, the condition by which the will of God could be achieved, that “all of us come to the knowledge of the truth.”¹⁸ Through the lens of French Christianity in the 17th century, this could be expressed as: “That they know the truth in order that they may be saved,” because the theology of the time taught

that there were a certain number of “absolutely necessary” truths, a condition *sine qua non* for eternal salvation;¹⁹ that there exist “particular truths we must believe and know to be saved.”²⁰

Along with this spiritual vision, De La Salle also saw education as a necessity and requirement for preparation for life in this world, particularly as a means to raise a person to the exercise of a profession.²¹

All this is from the perspective of the child. From the point of view of those responsible for the education of the child, the duty to educate him or her in a Christian way corresponds to the necessity of education. The natural fathers and mothers were, above all, those who are responsible, those to whom this duty falls.²² But such a duty also extended to “everyone who has authority over us” meaning, guardians in relation to their charges, god-parents to their godchildren, masters to their servants,²³ and teachers to their students.

As the divine will for salvation is universal, so too should the education that contributes to this salvation be universal. It should benefit all children, independent of their birth and of their economic, social, or the religious condition or the geographic location in which they find themselves. To reach them, De La Salle, in some cases, wanted to be in charge of the schools of all the different neighborhoods of certain cities: Rheims, Rouen, Marseille, etc. Note, for example, the tone of the correspondence, sent by him from Paris on April 16, 1706, to Brother Gabriel Drolin, in Rome: “We have Brothers just beginning in Marseille; they have nearly 200 students in one school alone. There are schools in four neighborhoods; the Brothers will eventually have them all.”²⁴

In practice, De La Salle began working with the poor children, in ministries of the type of the Charity Schools of that time. But later, in his Christian Schools, he began to attract not only children of artisans but also of the petty bourgeoisie. For a short while, he even was charged with young men born noble, but fallen into the poverty associated with exile and immigration, needing to adapt to a different language and social customs. He attended to the children of the city, especially the urban neighborhoods, but also to rural youths, whom he prepared for rural teaching. He cared for the human and Christian formation of the children of Catholics and tried to teach those of Protestants compelled by civil and religious authorities to adhere to Catholicism. He gave his attention to well-behaved children and youth as well as to those with behavioral problems and even to delinquents, that they might be rehabilitated to society.

And to what means did he resort in order to promote universal access, particularly of poor children, to schooling? He used:

1. *gratuity,*
2. *persuasion,*
3. *attractive schools and teachers,*
4. *effective instruction,*
5. *appropriate instruction,*
6. *a method for teaching large groups,* and
7. *“erandomarketing.”*

Gratuity

Blain said that “the ignorance of Christian doctrine amongst the lower class and rural people had as” one of its “causes their negligence in seeking instruction.”²⁵ He continued, affirming that “in order to take away any excuse they might claim for not seeking such instruction, it was necessary to create the gratuitous schools.” And he concluded: “This is what the Servant of God [that is, De La Salle] did.”

Gratuitous instruction in elementary school was not exclusively Lasallian. The Charity Schools were not paid schools. Next door to the women’s convents, there were gratuitous schools, parallel to the paid schools held within the convents. Gratuity was, likewise, not unknown to the Jesuits, with attention to external students. Saint Peter Fourier and Father Barré’s teachers also practiced gratuity, as did those responsible for the schools that operated in general hospitals,²⁶ establishments with the purpose of receiving street people, with the intention of reducing begging.

It was, however, not unusual that such gratuity was not absolute. For example, the need of accessories, such as clothes and school materials beyond the reach of certain poor people, brought the obligation to work at weaving and knitting, or performing other services. Thus, in the majority of the Charity Schools, poor students served as altar servers at the Masses celebrated at all hours, accompanied the priest who carried viaticum to the dying, were present in funeral and other processions, and assisted at the great liturgies of the yearly cycle.

De La Salle affirmed gratuity as a fundamental principle in his schools and considered it the “spearhead of his innovations,” in the words of the prior General Councilor of the Congregation.²⁷ He saw and desired this gratuity in the attitude and practice of his religious school teachers, of whom he wanted three gratuities: material, emotional and spiritual.

Materially, none of them received any payment for their work. Emotionally and spiritually, they were to act in a disinterested manner, that is, independent of recognition received, in order that God might be glorified and their students saved.²⁸ Moreover, with his characteristic realism, he warned those that followed him to ready their hearts for the possibility, even the probability, if not the certainty, that many of the poor favored by them not only would not respond affectionately, but that they would repay the services received with the most varied forms of ingratitude.²⁹

The gratuity spoken of here is not so much this second type, but rather the first, the material. According to Blain, De La Salle “founded his schools on pure charity,”³⁰ which meant that none of the students studying in them had to pay. According to the founder of the Christian Schools himself, studying in these “entirely for the glory of God.”³¹ His Brothers, according to the *Rule* of 1718, “will not receive from the pupils or their parents any money or presents, however small, not even a pin, on any day or occasion whatsoever.”³²

In reflecting with them on the unselfishness of Saint Cajetan, he reminded them: “You are committed to keep schools gratuitously and to live on bread alone, if need be, rather than accept anything.”³³ This material gratuity was, for De La Salle, essential. It integrated the very definition of his religious-educational Institute, the definition given in the first article of the first chapter of the *Common Rules*: “The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Society in which profession is made to conduct schools gratuitously.”³⁴ The *Common Rules* went on to affirm the indispensability of gratuity in the chapter that set forth the norms for relationships between the Brothers and their students: “The Brothers will everywhere conduct schools gratuitously, and this is **essential to their Institute.**”³⁵

In the examination of conscience that De La Salle asked his followers to make at the end of each year, he questioned them on their fidelity to this commitment and made use of the opportunity to remind them, yet one more time: “You have to conduct the school gratuitously, which is essential to your Institute.”³⁶

For De La Salle, this gratuity had to be absolute and without exception, that is to say, universal and for all, including for any child from a family in better economic conditions. Consider as an example of how this was practiced from a circular distributed in December 1697. It said that, in the Lasallian schools, the students “are taught gratuitously, with no payment, neither monthly, nor annual, nor in any form of presents or fees, under any pretext whatsoever. Books, pens, paper, ink, etc. are given to the most needy, that is, to almost all.”³⁷

At times, the case of the boarding house in the Saint Yon neighborhood of the city of Rouen is given as an example of an establishment that distanced itself from the principle of universal gratuity, saying that instruction there was paid. That, however, is not precisely true. The residential students paid (and paid well) for boarding: housing, food, laundry. Moreover, they paid differently according to the food they were served. There, “De La Salle had to bend himself to the custom of scaling the prices of boarding school according to the quality of food requested by the parents.”³⁸ Nonetheless, the teaching there was, properly speaking, gratuitous.

This allusion to Rouen brings to mind another fact in the history of Lasallian origins: that the desire and hope to be able to benefit the greatest possible number of children in an area with Christian education led De La Salle, in some cases, practically to pay for working on behalf of the poor. This was, for example, what happened in Rouen. There, his schoolmasters met with the poor children housed in the general hospital at the beginning of the day, at midday, and at night, and taught regular classes in the city’s schools during the morning and the afternoon. Exhausted and kept from following their regular communal practices, they felt that it was not possible for them to continue doing this double work. At their suggestion, De La Salle proposed to the committee

responsible for the city's poor that his religious schoolmasters be charged with only the four gratuitous schools maintained by the committee. The committee eventually agreed to the proposal, but offered such meager remuneration that it gave the impression that – in Blain's words – “it wanted to make them buy the honorable privilege of serving the poor.”³⁹ Nonetheless, De La Salle accepted the offer.

In this way, the Charity Schools previously reserved exclusively to the poor were becoming, at least in part, public schools attended by the working population without distinction regarding financial means.

Why the Lasallian insistence on this gratuity?

Fundamentally, in order that universal and obligatory access to education not become an empty promise. Gratuity was the only way by which the Christian School could be a “public” school, that is, accessible to all, both the poor who, beyond the other improprieties that tormented them, were also subject to being unable to pay for their children's studies and, therefore, found it impossible to send their children to a non-gratuitous school: “God has had the goodness to remedy so great a misfortune [that the children be left on their own, to fall into all kinds of vices] by the establishment of the Christian Schools ... Thank God, who has had the goodness to employ you to procure such an important advantage for children. Be faithful and exact to do this without any payment, so that you can say with Saint Paul, the source of my consolation is to announce the Gospel free of charge, without having it cost anything to those who hear me.”⁴⁰

With regard to the – few – students attending De La Salle's classes that were able to pay, his thinking was that the presence of these students did not legitimize doing away with gratuity in his schools. In the personal interpretation of Poutet,⁴¹ for De La Salle, in a particular way, Christian education was also a social and religious good, a service and a ministry to society, which should not be paid for, in the same way that a sacrament is not sold. De La Salle, along with Father Barré, thought that requiring someone to do so would be a type of simony.

Poutet gave two additional motives for the founder's insistence on gratuity. First, between 1679 and 1719 there were other systems of Christian instruction that required payment. Without gratuity, the Lasallian Institute would offer no different service, and so would not need to exist. Later, “without gratuity, the legislation in force at the time, civil as well as ecclesiastical, would have brought the Lasallian work to a quick end.”⁴²

Speaking in current terms, did De La Salle use a type of marketing to make his work known and to attract students to his schools? Although without using that term, he had clear strategies for calling attention to his work and attracting a clientele. If in the referenced 1697 pamphlet, along with all his letters, the absolute gratuity of his schools with no payment whatsoever, including the free provision of school materials, was made clear, it was because he believed that the ease of access guaranteed by gratuity would be an incentive of the first order for attracting those interested in instruction.

Moreover, he thought of gratuity as a way, not only of advertising his schools (making them known, awakening interest in them and drawing people to them), but also of awareness of the Institute itself, the Institute that made possible and guaranteed gratuitous instruction. An illustration of this claim is found in a letter drafted by him to Brother Gabriel Drolin on November 26, 1706. The founder had sent this faithful partner in the “heroic vow”⁴³ to Rome in 1702, in order to show his Institute's fidelity to the Pope and to put him in charge of a school, preferably papal, knowing that the presence of the Lasallian work and educational style near the head of the Church could facilitate future approval for this new religious Institute being organized. In time, Drolin, a notable and solitary fighter for Lasallian initiatives, in addition to opening his own school, saw it populated by a significant number of students. In it, different from other schoolmasters, he taught at no cost, as was the requirement of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. De La Salle supposed that such practice would call for the attention of those in Rome. Thus, in the referenced letter, after rejoicing in the fact of his companion achieving a good number of students, he asked him: “But does no Italian say anything to you about the gratuity of your school? Does this feature not bring you any public attention? Does no one ask what you live on or who enables you to run the school free of charge like that?”⁴⁴

Moreover, in terms of attracting the poor “clientele” to his school, for the founder, this attraction was linked to and even depended on the humble and poor life led by the religious of the Lasallian Institute. He returned to this point in the meditation that he offered for the day of Jesus Christ's birth. The angels' song attracted the shepherds to the poor and humble stable where Mary laid him. The Brothers should take the lesson for themselves:

“Be convinced that as long as you remain bound in your heart to poverty and to everything that can humble you, you will do good for souls. The angels of God will make you known and will inspire fathers and mothers to send you their children to be instructed.”⁴⁵

De La Salle had given away his material goods. He was not, therefore, in a position to meet personally to the costs accrued by the gratuitous teaching of students. How, then, did he reconcile gratuity in his schools with paying for the places in which to teach, to sustain the schoolmasters, the cost of acquiring materials for the use of the needy students, etc.?

He knew he had to find institutional means that would allow his schools to be accessible to all. He had as a norm not accepting responsibility for any school unless someone would guarantee the location for instruction and the conditions for the Brothers to live with dignity. The discussions held when considering whether to accept an invitation to run a school invariably included this item. For example, writing to Louis des Hayes, a priest in Rouen, on September 26, 1704, the saint said: “As for the cost, you know that we are not hard to please ... If you would kindly let me know ... what stipend you are hoping to give them [the Brothers], you will oblige me considerably.”⁴⁶

It was, therefore, the “founders,” that is, those who guaranteed the “funds” to cover the necessary costs for the functioning of each school, who met the costs. Generally, it was the same person who requested the presence of the Brothers: bishop, pastor, governor or an individual.

This systematic presentation of Lasallian origins is summarized in the memoir – the *Rouen Memoire* – sent in 1721, just two years after the death of De La Salle to the aldermen of the capital of Normandy. In it, the Brothers indicated:

- a. that they promised to maintain the schools gratuitously, in association, and this by a double vow expressed in a single phrase: association for the educative service of the poor;
- b. that, obligated by this vow to accept nothing from students or from their parents, they could not depend on uncertain generosity;
- c. that, as a consequence, when invited to go to a small city to take on some school, it was necessary to contract its support, at a base of 200 *livres* per year for a Brother as a minimum allowance.⁴⁷

What the Brothers did not tell them, nor needed to tell those outside themselves, was that, by virtue of the same requirement of gratuity, the resources given by the “founders” were forwarded to the Institute, in the person of its representatives, and not to the schoolmasters, personally committed by the vow to teach gratuitously.

Studying the historical evolution of the “Lasallian foundations,” Poutet showed how “little by little, the financial system of the public Christian Schools passed from private contributions, which reduced the short-falls of the (official) administrators, to the always more important contributions of the municipalities and the superintendents.”⁴⁸

In addition to the reasons given above for why De La Salle defended and practiced gratuity as something essential and universal in his schools, there is another that merits special development, connected to the teachers of the schools organized as guilds: the so-called Little Schools and the Writing Masters.

As will be seen in another chapter of this text,⁴⁹ looking at the spirit and the division of work in the statutes of trade guilds in place in De La Salle’s time, and comparing them to what happened in the Lasallian schools and the Lasallian Institute itself from its origins, there is the temptation to draw some correlations between the two types of organizations. There is, however, in the Lasallian educational system a point on which it is diametrically opposed to the practice of those teachers affiliated through guilds, namely, payment by the schools’ clientele for instruction.

Contrary to De La Salle’s practice, the guild teachers put economic profitability at the base of their system of instruction. The biographer Blain called them “mercenary schoolmasters.”⁵⁰ The Lasallian principle and practice of universal gratuity undermined their commercial conception of instruction.

The Lasallian Christian Schools were modeled on the parishes' Charity Schools, intended exclusively for the poor and, therefore, free. De La Salle and his Brothers needed to avoid any sign of payment for instruction received in their institutions. But there was another problem: De La Salle accepted some students who were not absolutely poor. Not many, but they existed and they were a reason the schoolmasters of the paid schools saw the founder of the Christian Schools as an illegal competitor, someone who deprived them of students who could and, from their point of view, should study in their institutions.

In Paris and several other places where they were solidly organized, De La Salle had what could be called a battle – long and victorious – in favor of universal gratuity of instruction.⁵¹ Three judicial lawsuits drew him to the capital. The first was in 1690, when after assuming and transforming the parish school of Saint Sulpice in 1688, De La Salle opened, in the same parish, a second establishment, this time on the Rue de Bac. The schoolmasters complained to the competent ecclesiastical authority, who embargoed the school's goods. Why? In the Lasallian school, "the rich students mix with the poor and, to our detriment, they look to the Charity Schools for primary instruction"⁵² De La Salle had to present himself before the tribunal in order "to defend the cause of God and of the poor."⁵³ The suit ended in his favor.

The second lawsuit took place in 1698. In the previous year, De La Salle opened a school in Saint Placide parish. The schoolmasters raised their complaint to the civil jurisdiction, who embargoed the school's furniture, belonging to the parish. The school closed for three months. De La Salle appeared with the Brothers who had taught there before the *locum tenens*. Mme. de Maintenon⁵⁴ intervened in favor of the school. De La Salle went to the tribunal, but the schoolmasters persisted in claiming that the school in Saint Placide "was not as gratuitous as the Brothers said." De La Salle challenged them to prove their claim. He even said that if they could do so, "he was willing to close all the Brothers' schools." This challenge unsettled the schoolmasters. The *locum tenens* insisted on De La Salle's position, but, in the face of the silence of De La Salle's accusers, he ordered that "everything go back to how it was before." The classrooms were reopened.⁵⁵

Finally, between 1704 and 1706, there was a whole series of accusations, embargos, condemnations and, principally, prohibitions: against placing the identifying sign ("*Christian School*") on the schools; against maintaining the schools; against teaching, particularly teaching "the art of writing"; against establishing a training school for schoolmasters; against living in community. Threats were even made of bringing accusations before the tribunal against "any person of means" who sent "their children to the Brothers' school." As a consequence, in the beginning of 1706, De La Salle withdrew the Brothers from the city. The pastor, under pressure from parents to keep the Brothers, reached an agreement with the schoolmasters. He asked for the return of the Brothers. De La Salle agreed, but demanded guarantees, which the pastor made. In front of a notary, he declared that "the Brothers should enjoy every freedom in order to continue their work."⁵⁶

As a result of judgments of this nature, Lasallian schools legally lost the right to be "public," that is, open to all. Tracing this historic conflict helps explain the founder's repeated, vehement, even stubborn insistence on the absolute guarantee of gratuity in his school. It was necessary that the challenge he had made to the Writing Masters on March 7, 1698 (that he would close his schools if they could prove the non-gratuity of instruction in any of them), not, in any way, be compromised by any of his Brothers, for whom he had put his hand in the fire.

This also helps explain certain prescriptions established by the initial texts of the Lasallian congregation, such as: "They will not allow anyone to enter the schools except priests or a person in authority who comes to see the schools, and the Inspector or the teacher in charge⁵⁷ will always accompany them during the whole time they remain."⁵⁸ For one who knows and understands well the context and everything about the history summarized here, a text such as this can be read as: No member of the schoolmasters' guilds who comes to spy on who is attending and – as later will be seen – what is being taught in this school will be allowed to enter.

The Lasallian fight for universal gratuity, even for those who could pay, continued even after the death of the founder and caused some changes to be made to the *Conduct*. For example, in the data gathered during the enrollment process, the item referring to economic status (profession of their parents) was dropped, because it carried the risk of serving as corroborative evidence for ill-intentioned lawsuits.

Persuasion

According to the research of Maggiolo, at the end of the 17th century, despite all the ecclesiastical and civil prescriptions, 79% of the population of France still did not know how to sign their name.⁵⁹ This indicates that school attendance was still a minority, especially amongst the most socially and economically disadvantaged.

De La Salle and his co-founders, concerned with the education of all, lived in the midst of this reality. They asked themselves: how could they attract children to school, make them dedicated to it and have them attend it for a long enough period of time? The various elements of the responses they came up with are identified in the chapter of the *Conduct* entitled: “Causes of Absences and the Means of Preventing Them.”⁶⁰

Examining these causes, they reflected that one of them – the second – was the parents who, beyond not caring about their children’s regular attendance at school, were from the beginning not interested in enrolling them in school. When they did enroll them, they did not commit to their attending for the length of time necessary.

Given this, the Brothers together developed arguments to be used to convince the parents to assume the attitudes and appropriate measures to enroll their children in school, have them attend regularly and want to stay in school. Fundamentally, what was required was to make them “understand their obligation to have their children instructed”⁶¹; to emphasize to them the advantages that it brought; and to make them see the dangers of not doing so: “When parents withdraw their children from school to make them work while they are too young and not yet sufficiently instructed, they must be made to understand that they harm them a great deal.”⁶²

What is this danger? The “lack of this knowledge [how to read and write] will leave the children incapable of any employment.” And what were the benefits of emphasizing this? Above all with those parents who “withdraw their children from school” under the pretext of needing them to work, it was necessary to show them that “to have their children earn a little, they will make them lose a very much greater advantage. It should be explained to them how important it is for an artisan to know how to read and write well. It should be emphasized that, however limited the child’s intelligence, the child that knows how to read and write will be capable of anything.”⁶³

Thus, more than the external coercive measures, such as those envisioned by the royal declaration of December 13, 1698, De La Salle recommended persuasion, usually positive. And – even at a time of absolutely hegemonic Christianity – he advised pleading their case from the secular argument – the impossibility of holding a job in the future – rather than trying to convince the parents with religiously-based logic, in order to make them see “the harm that may be done their children by lack of instruction in those things which concern their salvation, with which the poor are often little concerned.”⁶⁴

But, what if this type of argumentation did not work? There remained the alternative of returning to a more negative type of persuasion, even one with a coercive force: “Since this class of poor are ordinarily those who receive alms [that is, by the parish], a list should be given to the parish priests of all those who do not come to school, their ages and their addresses. This is done in order that no alms be given their parents and that they may be urged and obliged to send their children to school.”⁶⁵

An Attractive School and Teachers

De La Salle and his co-founders, however, discovered that the school and the schoolmasters did not always attract children, nor stimulate them to attend with dedication and persistence. They realized that not gaining or holding their loyalty, as would be said today, was linked, among other things, to the teacher’s lack of preparation or inexperience, to his way of being and the mistaken educational practices that he used, such as excessive condescension or excessive rigor: “The third reason why students absent themselves is because they acquire a distaste for school. This may be due to the fact that they have a new teacher who is not yet sufficiently trained. Such teachers do not know how to conduct themselves in school. They at once resort to corrections, or they are too lax and have no order or silence in the classroom.”⁶⁶

In this case, the *Conduct* recommended “leave a teacher neither alone in a classroom nor placed solely in charge until thoroughly trained by a teacher of great experience in the schools.”⁶⁷

The fourth reason why students absent themselves is that they have little affection for their teacher. This is due to the fact that the teacher is not pleasant and in almost every situation does not know how to win the students. This kind of teacher resorts only to severity and punishments, and consequently the children are unwilling to come to school.⁶⁸

What was the remedy? For the teacher to change his way of being and working, that he do his best “to be very pleasant and to acquire a polite, affable, and frank appearance, without, however, assuming an undignified or familiar manner. Let them do everything for all of their students to win them all to our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶⁹

Regarding punishments, there is an entire chapter of the *Conduct* to direct their pedagogical use. One of the pieces of advice given in it to the schoolmasters was not to punish certain students, because correcting them “can only repel them and alienate them from school.”⁷⁰

Effective Teaching

It remained clear that one of the reasons many parents preferred to have their children work rather than send them to school was because, in De La Salle’s words, “they are indifferent and uninterested” toward school. But such indifference and disinterest, at times, was not simply a question of a lack of awareness of the importance of education and study. It also had a justifiable foundation: there were cases in which, in the eyes of the poor and the artisans, school taught nothing, or almost nothing. They did not value going to school because, as De La Salle and his schoolmasters themselves observed, “they are persuaded that their children learn nothing or very little.”⁷¹

The solution, therefore, was to guarantee effective and efficient teaching: to establish clear goals and to use the best means to achieve them; truly to teach and to make the students actually progress, such that they and their parents could see that attending school is not lost time. “Take care there to make your students learn well,” wrote De La Salle to one of his Brothers.⁷²

Appropriate Instruction

When Blain said that in order to deprive “the common people and the people of the interior of every excuse that they could offer” for their “negligence in seeking instruction,” it was not enough to state that it was necessary “to create the gratuitous schools,” he added that it would also be necessary “to attract them to them in order to interest them.” He boldly stated that the founder did this, opening his unpaid schools “for those who, due to their poverty, were prevented from attending the schools intended for them.”⁷³ De La Salle not only observed that, in some cases, poor parents did not enroll their children in schools that taught little or nothing. He also noticed that, in other cases, there were parents who were sufficiently sensitive to realize that what was taught to their children in the traditional schools did not correspond fully to what they really needed, that is, to their interests.⁷⁴

Because of this, with his partners in the educational project, De La Salle outlined and established a school carefully thought out for them, made to measure, planned according to what they needed. Care was taken to make it function and to offer programs appropriate to their situations and real needs, that is, to their interests.

The *Common Rules*, in fact, spoke of the Lasallian school existing to give children “a suitable education.”⁷⁵ The education that suited them was, first and foremost, that which their parents desired for them. Did the parents want their children to enter a modest profession? Along with the catechism, which showed them what they should know and do as Christians, the Lasallian schools would offer a useful program, with reading, writing, arithmetic and civility, all elements that would help them in carrying out some future trade.

Were the parents enrolling a student who was “already a young man”? Then the Director, in addition to what he asked all prospective students, would inquire what they “expect the child to do later on; whether they hope to have the child learn a trade, and how soon,”⁷⁶ obviously in order to keep it in mind in setting the contents of his particular studies and the time dedicated to such study.

Were the students enrolling already adults, seeking education for themselves? Then the appropriate education for them was whatever education they sought. This is what happened with the candidates to the Sunday School, called “the Christian Academy” by De La Salle. They were young men who had already completed elementary education and who worked during the week. They wanted, nonetheless, to increase their knowledge, especially to better carry out their trade. Doncourt, in his *Notes on the Church and the Parish of Saint Sulpice*, in writing the history of the beginnings of that school, noted the way in which the Lasallian schoolmasters, in this case, implemented the practice of envisioning instruction appropriate to their clientele: “The Brothers interviewed them and became aware of what each one wanted to learn; afterwards, they divided them into classes.”⁷⁷

While lawyers, doctors, writers and other professions used Latin for spoken and written communication, to study philosophy and the sciences, to understand, explain and make use of literary texts, or to exhibit learnedness, the poor and the artisans only used it to say correctly the Latin prayers which they made as Christians. In everything else, they thought and expressed themselves in their mother tongue. De La Salle had them learn to read French before Latin, contrary to the custom of the time.

Well-prepared, inviting teachers who made themselves “everything for everybody.” Prudence in correction. Effective and appropriate instruction. What was the result of all this? Morales, drawing above all on Blain, said it in this way: “Father De La Salle and the first Brothers brought about the miracle, for the age, that the children ‘loved their school and wanted to be in it.’”⁷⁸

Method for Teaching the Masses: The Simultaneous Mode

In the simultaneous mode of teaching, the teacher teaches all the students in the room or a specific group of students within it at the same time, and the members of the class or group in question carry out the same activity of listening, reading, writing at the same time. This way of teaching allows the teacher to attend to a larger group of students than does the individual mode of teaching. Thus, using it was an option that allowed De La Salle and his Brothers to reach a larger group of school-aged children and youth.

Concretely, in the Lasallian school, all of the students in a class participated simultaneously in the catechism class, in the prayers made throughout the school day and in the songs sung at the departure from afternoon classes. Beyond this, activities were simultaneous for all the students of homogenous groups, made up of the members of a given lesson (of reading, writing, arithmetic, etc.).⁷⁹ The *Common Rules* directed, for example, that during class the teacher should be continually attentive “to have everyone who reads follow along in the same lesson,”⁸⁰ and the *Conduct* repeated this same direction, but gave more explanation of what the simultaneous activity undertaken consisted of: “The teacher will take care that all of the students having the same lesson follow [reading softly] the one who is reading [aloud].”⁸¹ Meanwhile, those from other lessons were busy with other activities: writing, arithmetic, etc.

This way of teaching had already begun to be practiced before De La Salle and his Brothers. Indeed, a pamphlet held by the National Library of Paris proposed it before 1680. Comenius (1592-1671), albeit in a somewhat utopian fashion, asked that all students be taught “all at the same time and only one time.”⁸² Saint Peter Fourier (1565-1640) had his Sisters of Notre Dame used this mode, along with the individual mode, and also limited to six the number of students to be attended to synchronously.⁸³ After him, Canon Roland (1642-1678) had the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus of Rheims use it.

De La Salle and his Brothers, therefore, did not invent this way of teaching. They adopted it, along with others. They perfected it. They regularized its use. They systematized it. They applied it in all of their schools, to all of their students in the same room or division, regardless of the number of students, and in all disciplines. They contributed, thus, to its generalized adoption. In Poutet’s view, “it would not be incorrect to assert that the end of the individual system and the anarchy of the Writing Masters and of the teachers of the Little Schools was only rendered extinct in a definitive way through the progressive success of the schools directed by the Brothers” of De La Salle.⁸⁴

It is necessary, however, to reflect that this mode of teaching was used most of the time, but not exclusively, in the Lasallian school: “Lasallian teaching is at one moment simultaneous, at another individual, and at another

mutual, because it respects, at the same time, the very unequal capacities of children, and the demands of teaching by groups [defined according to] levels.”⁸⁵

“Endomarketing”

In any time and place, the first and principal factor of advertising a school has always been what today is called “endomarketing,” that is, internal marketing, which results from the users themselves searching for a product according to its quality and the quality of those who offer it – in this case, the recipients of education in Christian Schools, who experienced its quality and were happy to go to the school.

Observing the various methods considered by De La Salle to allow that the greatest possible number of children be attracted to his schools and benefit from the education that they offered, one sees that he recognized and opted for the attraction of a well-conducted and successful school as the way to draw students. Reading his letters, one observes that he explicitly recommended it to his collaborators; in one of the letters he sent to Brother Robert, he wrote, “You are doing well to try to have your students make progress, both to increase their number and to fulfill your duty.”⁸⁶

Two somewhat surprising passages from the *Conduct* can serve as a concrete illustration of how this type of attraction was practiced. The first is the case of poor children who, wanting to go to school, became allies of the school in making their parents want to send them to it: “An effort must be made to attract the children of people like this and win them over by every possible means, which can often be done with success. Ordinarily, the children of the poor do as they wish. Their parents often take no care of them or even idolize them.⁸⁷ What their children want they also want. Thus, it is enough that their children should want to come to school for them to be content to send them there.”⁸⁸

The second addresses the function of the Visitor of the Absent Students⁸⁹ and the criteria for their selection. When the schoolmasters selected students for carrying out this important “office,” they took care that, beyond the other characteristics appropriate to this function, they be “among the students who are most loyal and most assiduous in coming to school” and looked for those who showed “their affection and zeal for the school” not only in persuading “unruly students who easily and lightly miss school to come to class regularly” but also by, upon meeting in the street “children wandering the streets in idleness, not attending any school,” inspiring them also to become their colleagues.⁹⁰

From this can be drawn the conclusion that De La Salle, defending and promoting obligatory universal education through this series of means and making it accessible to all, along with other educators of his time, such as Saint Peter Fourier, contributed to education opening its doors to the great popular masses.

Assessment by Historians of Education

These are the facts. How do historians of education see them: De La Salle’s contribution to the **universalization of education** in general and, particularly, the **use of the simultaneous mode of teaching**, one of the means used to facilitate this universalization?

In relation to the **universalization of education**, scholars affirm that De La Salle defended it as a principle and contributed to its becoming a reality. They cite the reasons that, in their view, De La Salle had for defending this principle. However, taken together, they miss or fail to understand the principle among these: to contribute to the realization of the divine plan that all people come to know the truth and be saved. They also recall practices subsequent to this Lasallian conviction and endeavor: for example, De La Salle’s insistence to the parents that they have their children taught and his fight against absenteeism.

Historians recognize that De La Salle contributed to universal access to education becoming possible, thanks to his practice of universal gratuity: “The Brothers of the Christian Schools brought into effect the gratuity of primary education so often ordered and almost never practiced.”⁹¹ Likewise they demonstrate that the effort of De La Salle and the Brothers to generalize education was effective. The Brothers “brutally pushed back male

illiteracy” in the places where they worked, and “the France with the weakest growth in literacy in the 18th century” was “that which did not welcome the De La Salle Brothers.”⁹² Finally, they do not conceal that the application of this principle was not made without resistance by the members of the French elite.

Concerning the **use of the simultaneous mode of teaching**, the first thing to be said is that, in speaking of Lasallian educational practice, this form of teaching and the leading role of the Lasallian Brothers with regard to it is the thing to which historians of education (rightly) devote most space.

From the historical point of view, the authors recall that this method of teaching children, “grouping them according to their capacity, using for those of the same grade the identical book, and all of them following the same lesson with just one teacher,”⁹³ was discovered and began to spread gradually in the 17th century. There are those who recall various people and groups who contributed to this. However, many authors, unaware of such persons and groups, attribute the introduction of this way of giving a class to De La Salle and the Lasallian schoolmasters. So closely do they link De La Salle to it, and so clearly characterize the Brothers by its use, that they call it “the method of De La Salle and his Brothers.”⁹⁴

This possibly occurs as a result of the certainly decisive role that De La Salle and his followers played in relation to it. By regulating it in a detailed way, they spread it broadly and helped to defend it and make it victorious when, later, it was rivaled by the mutual, or Lancasterian, method and thereby became the most common method of teaching. Some scholars bear in mind that the general adoption of this type of teaching by De La Salle and his followers was complimented with the use of elements of the individual and even the mutual modes.

Some recognize that this way of teaching, with the schoolmaster simultaneously directing the entire room gathered in front of him, was both required by the large number of students and was a factor that allowed the classes to be so numerous and, thus, contributed to the benefits of education being able to be extended to more children and youths.⁹⁵

Vincent thought that this method established a certain pedagogical distance between the teacher and the student,⁹⁶ and Ponce judged that it diminished the possibility of more personal knowledge of each student.⁹⁷ Both authors considered it advantageous with regard to the number of students able to be attended to, its pedagogical efficacy, school discipline and encouragement of work in the class. Many historians see it as an advance in the process of teaching,⁹⁸ others, as a novelty, so unprecedented that it was “a curiosity that would be worth seeing,”⁹⁹ or even a pedagogical revolution, “a radical shift.”¹⁰⁰ According to Lélièvre and Nique, with this method “instruction finally had a precise, rigorous method useful for the little-formed schoolmasters of the time, appropriate for actually making large groups of students progress.”¹⁰¹ In Power’s judgment, “without a method like this, perfected by the Brothers, popular elementary education would never have been possible.”¹⁰²

Popular Education (The Social Dimension)

2

Social Reality and Education

Contrasts

It is necessary to keep in mind that the French Revolution did not take place until the end of the 18th century. It is true that, in the socio-political realm as in others, in De La Salle's time, new elements were already being set forth; but until they came to full light in 1789, there would still be a long period of gestation.

Socially, the 17th century in France presented great contrasts. There was, during it, a profound belief in human inequality. This belief was manifested in the division of society into social classes. The first of these was that of cleric. It held the highest position, with privileges, exemptions and, especially for the higher clerical levels, wealth. The nobility constituted the second class. It was less numerous, but also privileged. The third, more commonly known as the Third Estate, gathered all those who were not included in the others. Its only privilege consisted in the exclusivity of business and trade activities.

Into this last class fell the urban bourgeoisie: those who carried out free trades and were men of money. It also included the growing (both in quantity and economic and social importance) petty bourgeoisie: the men of the shops ("boutiques") and business and, close to them, the artisans, who owned and managed their instruments of work in steady employment and attracted their clientele, to whom they sold what they produced. The manual laborers in manufacturing in the cities (the origins of the later industries) also belonged to this class, as did the poor, the lowest social category, especially people without professional qualifications and without employment. They survived on casual work (odd jobs) or alms (for the reception of which, they were listed in the parishes' registries of the poor, receiving a certificate of indigence, generally furnished by the council of the poor of the parish). Lastly, to this class belonged the destitute, the beggars and vagabonds, the growth of whom contributed to continual battles, with their subsequent looting, destruction, epidemics and misery, above all in the rural area.

Regarding the least fortunate portion of the Third Estate, Marcel Larchiver noted that "approximately seventy-five percent of the French population was composed of the poor or of people of so little means that they could not meet the increase in the price of basic goods when it rose."¹⁰³ And Fiévet added:

A whole world of people in need and people with low income – seven to ten per cent of the population – lives day-to-day, concerned about daily bread and a few pieces of money. At the national level, Vauban, in his *Dîme Royale* of 1710, divides the nineteen million French into ten parts. In it, one can read that nine tenths of the population lives in situations of current or possible precariousness. Of this total, a tenth is reduced to begging; five tenths are people who live in a difficult situation; three tenths live in an uncomfortable situation entangled in debts and lawsuits; the rest, one tenth, belong to the world of the rich.¹⁰⁴

On the one hand, people continued with the medieval, Franciscan vision of the poor as the image of Jesus Christ. Bossuet's famous sermon given in 1659 "on the eminent dignity of the poor in the Church" is well-known. De La Salle himself aligned himself with this idea: You should consider the poor "as members of Jesus Christ and his

well-beloved ... they are the living images of Jesus Christ, our divine Master.”¹⁰⁵ On the other hand, the idea of the poor as a social danger, which had begun taking shape in the centuries immediately prior, continued to grow.

In a reactionary move, legal prescriptions concerning the poor increased. General alms or committees for the poor were created to care for them. Administrations were authorized to charge taxes for this care. The great confinement of the indigent and poor people began. In the Church, concern for them was manifested in two ways: by works of charity, in which Saint Vincent de Paul emerged as a man of prime importance, along with his religious Sisters, and by the popular schools conceived of by them, by entities such as the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament or figures such as Father Barré in Rouen and Canons Démià in Lyon and Roland and John Baptist de La Salle in Rheims.

The types of basic education offered in this era varied according to the membership of the people in one or another of these states or, as is still said, “according to their station.” The candidates to the clergy made use of the ever-increasing numbers of seminaries for their studies. The sons of families in good economic circumstances made use of various ways to receive an education “according to their station.” Frequently, their education would begin with the presence of a tutor in their own house. They could also attend places of paid instruction, such as the Little Schools or schools of the Writing Masters. Additionally, there were also boarding schools, such as those of the Jesuits and the Oratorians, available to them, especially at the secondary level.

The Little Schools were run by individual masters, but controlled by the bishop, through a sort of diocesan secretariat of education, called the *chantré* (that is, cantor, because they were also in charge of the children of the choir), or the *écolâtre* (scholastic). The schools of the Writing Masters were also houses of paid instruction. They offered advanced primary instruction which, in addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, introduced students to the art of calligraphy and to accounting.

Concerning the education of people in general, some elements are already known, as they were presented in the previous chapter (on universal education): the absence of schools in many places in the interior; the existence of “parish schools” for the poor in both rural areas as well as in the city; the progressive offer of gratuitous instruction to the most needy by religious institutions; the rise, on one hand, of ideas in favor of education for all and gratuitous for the poor and, on the other, of resistance against its generalization and the raising of the level of studies for the popular class; and the various types of interest – religious, social, economic – that motivated the promoters of instruction for the people of the popular level.

Here, it is necessary to add that, in those times of belief in inequality, the poor, in addition to being able to study in the Charity Schools, could at least theoretically also be accepted, partially, into the Little Schools. But in both they were discriminated against. In the Charity Schools by the simple fact that these existed as a recognized form of “apartheid,” as places designated exclusively for them. “Sad privilege of the poor,” exclaimed Poutet, “that of being relegated to gratuitous schools closed to the rich!”¹⁰⁶ In the Little Schools they were discriminated against by being placed on one side, with the rich on the other. The reason given was “hygiene”: so that the rich would not contract “the distress inseparable from the poor,” as the author of the *The Parish School*¹⁰⁷ said. “This physical discrimination was also accompanied by another affective and pedagogical discrimination: in these schools, the masters either ignored them entirely or treated them in such a way that they were forced to leave the school.”¹⁰⁸

Stability

This was a time of social stability. The most commonly held opinion was that each person should stay in the condition in which they had been born. In an expansion on this assertion, Vivard, speaking of the human prototype cultivated in that century, wrote, “After 1650, the ideal of the ‘honest man’¹⁰⁹ was progressively replacing that of the hero: each person should limit their aspirations to the possibilities of their condition, remain conformed to their reality and in harmony with the political and social class” in force.¹¹⁰

The belief in the innate inequality of men and social immobility were defended with philosophical and teleological arguments. Philosophically, for example, the nobility used the theory of the innate against the bourgeoisie to lay a foundation for their own value and, indirectly, to justify their fight for power. According to this theory, the criterion of a person’s value was birth: blood, the lineage already contained what the individual would become.

Molière, in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* [*The Pretentious Young Ladies*], mocked the supposed innate knowledge of this social stratum. The people of quality, that is to say, the old nobility, “know everything, but have never studied.”¹¹¹ The bourgeoisie, for its part, argued that the criterion of value was merit. The intellectual and moral qualities did not come in the cradle; they were acquired by education and work.

Theologically, there were those who would affirm that it is a law, and the common law of human existence, that the Providence of God destines some to the clergy or the nobility and has others be born in plebian conditions, with all that that signified.¹¹²

In the stable, as well as hierarchical, society of the “*Ancien Régime*,”¹¹³ education also served to instill respect for the class system and the established classes. When, for example, Demia tried to convince the nobility and the bourgeoisie of his city of the urgency of spending money on the education of the poor, they told him that “from time to time, the popular schools prepared them for revolution and intrigue, made them too knowledgeable for manual professions and created in them ambitious desires.” The *chantre* of Lyon countered: pure fallacy. The members of the nobility and the bourgeoisie were not bearing in mind that the Christian Schools formed students “for obedience, humility and respect for legitimate authorities.”¹¹⁴ Gersperrin confirmed this assertion: “How can it be forgotten that the moral teaching administered in the Little Schools is that of accepted humility and of the most total respect to the established order and the social hierarchy?”¹¹⁵

Privileges

Just as in politics the absolute monarchy was accepted and in religion an orthodoxy defended at any price was imposed, in the juridical realm the regime of privileges (*privus lex* = private law) reigned. Privileges of every type: honorific distinctions (the right to use a sword; to occupy places of precedence; etc.) and useful ones (the right to exercise, exclusively, certain trades; fiscal exemptions deriving from birth line, from holy orders, from treaties or from purchase, etc.). Trade guilds, for example, benefited from privileges, particularly the “sworn” guilds,¹¹⁶ to which were given exclusive privilege at a professional level within the limits of a particular territory.¹¹⁷

The guild system also had repercussions for education through the monopoly that it created and defended. The statutes concerning teachers of the Little Schools and the Writing Masters assured them that the children of the rich (who were able to pay) could not enroll in the Charity Schools, which guaranteed them a wealthy clientele.

The control that they exercised in having only poor children study in the Charity Schools was one of the reasons those children had to carry identification that would certify their condition of poverty. As just one example: according to article 21 of the declaration of February 27, 1641, by Msgr. Harlay, archbishop of Rouen:

all poor orphans and others in need who do not have resources to pay individual masters will go to the schools of the poor, where they will be taught for the love of God¹¹⁸ and will be obliged to bear on their hat or chest a badge on which is printed: *Poor of the City of Rouen*, with the name of the child and, above, our seal or that of our sub-delegate.¹¹⁹

This identification was abolished on March 6, 1653. But as a result of complaints presented by the Writing Masters, beginning on August 11, 1694, the committee of the poor required a statement of indigence signed by the parish priests before granting a child authorization to attend the gratuitous schools.¹²⁰

Furthermore, the Writing Masters had the monopoly on training of the “writers” and the “accountants.” Teaching (for payment) advanced writing and arithmetic to prepare students to keep account books, and to carry out the function of scribe or public writing was a privilege (“*privus lex*”!) that only they enjoyed. According to a judicial sentence in their favor, in 1704,

the art of writing in its perfection, as well as the teaching of arithmetic, was reserved to the masters with a recognized capacity, verified by three days of exams. Only the writers, ‘to the exclusion of all others,’ had the right to exercise such a profession and to ‘display as a sign, in front of their house (school) or next to it a card decorated with one or more golden feathers,’ without which ‘no one other than the referenced masters can display posters or signs or advertisement for writing, under the penalty of confiscation and one hundred pounds in fine.’¹²¹

Violence

The time of Louis XIV was one of many armed conflicts with other powers. The king himself, before dying, lamented having loved war excessively. Essentially, between 1667 and 1713, war was practically uninterrupted. Studies show that in the interior of France, in the 17th century, violence, explicit or otherwise, was very frequent. This point of reference is necessary given that, in 17th-century France, the school institutions of all levels were considered to be a means to purge the seeds of this evil from people.¹²²

De La Salle: Position and Activity

Man of His Time

De La Salle was born in the environment of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie. Therefore, in the great aristocratic Seminary of Saint Sulpice, he was prepared to live as a member of yet another privileged order, that of cleric, and was educated according to strict norms with regard to the established social status.

De La Salle was a man of his time. In his writings, he wielded the ideas and the language of his era. He spoke, for example, of the queen, Saint Isabel, who was criticized for giving to the sick services that were considered unworthy of “people of her quality.”¹²³ Orthodox, as befitted a good Christian and ecclesiastic in those years, he absorbed and transmitted that which traditional theology taught. For example, he spoke of the status that is prescribed for us by God, of the divine plan that makes some poor and others rich and, moreover, of authority, whether civil or religious, as something of divine origin.¹²⁴

De La Salle did not question theoretically either the social reality or the doctrinal foundations that justified it. His book on good manners did not condemn the social inequities: he stated them and directed how to take them into consideration. In that text, he taught that the practices of the urbane, “give due regard to proper times and places and to the people with whom we have to deal.” With regard to these,

We must likewise consider ourselves and who we are, for whoever is inferior to others is obliged to show submission to those who are superiors, whether by birth, by official position, or by social rank. We ought to pay them much greater respect than we would to someone who is our equal.

A peasant, for example, ought to show more respect for a lord than would a working man who does not depend upon that lord. Similarly, a working man ought to show greater respect for a lord than would a gentleman who happens to be visiting that lord.¹²⁵

Social Conscience

Nonetheless, historically situated and conditioned, De La Salle was not unaware of the doctrine referring to justice and to injustice in relation to the poor and was never unaware of the reigning social inequality in his surroundings and of its repercussions for children and youth. In his catechism, he taught that, among the sins that cry out for vengeance before God are “oppression of poor people” along with “the unjust withholding of the wages of servants and workers.”¹²⁶ He also recalled that “the holy Fathers of the Church agree that if we do not give to poor people what we can give according to our state, we are stealing from them, and we commit an injustice in their regard.”¹²⁷

From a tender age, De La Salle was accustomed to giving alms to beggars. He was canon of the cathedral in his home city, to whom fell the charge of works of charity by the Church of Rheims. It is impossible that, in the streets of Paris through which he would walk between the seminary and the university, he did not have contact with the misery that was as widespread as the splendor of the *Ancien Régime*. Above all, after the beginning of his work, his awareness of the poverty in the middle classes deepened through contact with teachers and students of a different socioeconomic origin than his own.

De La Salle saw that there were children who, left to themselves, roamed the streets. He became aware that the results of this condition are regrettable, for these poor children, accustomed to lead an idle life for many years, have great difficulty adjusting when it comes time for them to go to work. Furthermore, through association with bad companions, they learn to commit many sins that are very difficult to stop later on because of the persistent bad habits they have contracted over such a long time.¹²⁸

It did not avoid his notice that the ill that these children suffered was not purely individual. The bad “example” of others, the “occasions” that they found to go astray, the abandonment in which they were left by parents who were ignorant or otherwise occupied, the insufficient attention given to them by poorly-formed teachers, not carrying out their duties or chasing the students away, could more easily cause in them this evil than did a heart or mind poorly disposed.¹²⁹ Without using current language, he admitted that sin is also structural, that is, that these children had also been victims of a society that ignored or excluded them.

Nor did he fail to notice that the evil that they did was neither abstract nor limited to the life of the soul; it was concrete and encompassing. The salvation willed by God was not realized in its entirety for many of them. Those who were not saved physically, because they were poorly fed, poorly dressed and poorly developed, were not saved intellectually, because they did not go to school. They were not saved socially, because they were not prepared for useful employment and did not know how to overcome the barriers that confined them to their social “order.” They were not saved morally, because they grew up practicing evil acts which, when repeated, became vicious habits. They were not saved spiritually, because “with regard to the salvation of the soul, they have been left to their own devices.”¹³⁰

De La Salle helped transform this negative social reality. He contributed to the fuller accomplishment of the divine plan of salvation, not realized in many people. To bring this about, first, he himself **stepped down from his social class**, and second, **he contributed to the promotion of the poor** from within the world of the poor themselves.

Demotion in Class

Before judging the one who recommended that “because the majority of your disciples are born poor, you must encourage them to despise riches and to love poverty”¹³¹ with the eyes and sensibility of citizens and Christians of the 21st century, we should consider that the person who wrote this was someone who allowed God to take him, step by step, on a surprising social, economic and cultural exodus:

It was due to two circumstances, that is to say, the meeting with M. Nyel and the proposal that woman [Mme. de Croyères] made to me, that I began my work with the children’s schools. In no way did I foresee that in advance. Not because no one had proposed it to me before, since several friends of M. Roland had tried to interest me. But it had not entered into my spirit, and I never had the intention of carrying out such a project. And if I had foreseen that the care, purely charitable, that I took of the teachers could be transformed into the duty of living with them, I would have abandoned it, because, quite naturally, especially at the beginning, I considered those working with me in the schools to be lower than my lackey. Just the thought of my having to live with them would have been insupportable. I felt, in effect, a great repugnance at the beginning, when I invited them to come to my house, which lasted for two years. It seems to me it was for this reason that God, who directs all things with wisdom and gentleness, and is not accustomed to forcing men’s inclination, wanting to engage me totally in the care of the schools, did so in an almost imperceptible way, little by little, leading me from one commitment to the next, to what I never would have envisioned at the beginning.¹³²

We are dealing with someone who began by working **for** the teachers, having for them a “purely charitable care,” the solicitude of a benefactor who, from the outside, helped them, but thought he would continue where he was; who went on to live “**with** them,” albeit “with great repugnance”; and who, carried “from commitment to commitment” by the heroic decision inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, renounced first his canonry and then his material goods, and wound up living **with** them. Someone who, in the testimony of Blain, who knew him and wrote his biography, did “everything the same as they did,”¹³³ as one among them.

We are dealing with someone who took himself from the upper ranks to the lower and from the center to the periphery. Someone who left his noble, bourgeois social status to live with those whom he had previously considered “inferior to a lackey” who had served him when in the family mansion. A man who, when writing to them, normally dispensed with the philosophical ideas and terminology that he studied and used simple language appropriate to their condition and preparation. Someone who stepped from wealth to live in the modest and insecure world of the popular teachers. A man who, in renouncing his material goods in favor of the poor, kept for himself barely 200 *livres* of income, the annual salary normally received by his teachers, and who shared with them a frugal table and an austere way of life. Someone who, more than once in his life, found himself obliged “to live day to day,”¹³⁴ as he personally wrote to Brother Gabriel Drolin. A man who, in a word, experienced with them what it is to be poor and to be called poor (“We are poor Brothers”).¹³⁵

In other words, we are dealing with someone who, in language later than him, undertook a true “demotion,” which was alarming and scandalous for his friends, acquaintances and all those who questioned and criticized his decisions, not with words, but with deeds.¹³⁶

Lifting Up the Poor

It is true that in De La Salle one finds some overlap with what today is called popular education, particularly that of Christian inspiration. For example, he opted preferentially for the poor, was confident of their abilities, took Jesus Christ as the point of reference for humanity and practiced a permanent continuity between theory and action. But this in no way gives us license to say that the founder of the Christian Schools practiced **popular education** in the sense in which this is today understood and carried out in the Third World, particularly in Latin America. What one finds in him is, indeed, an **education for the people**.

In concrete terms, he opted for **popular clientele**, went to meet them, offered them **preferential consideration and love**, created a **school and programs to fit them**, contributed to the creation of a **popular culture**, prepared **popular teachers** and had his school carry out the **social function** of lifting up the poor.

Popular Clientele

Blain, in various passages speaking of De La Salle, juxtaposed to the word poor the term public, which Furetière defines as “the mass of the citizens.” Blain, at a certain point, saw De La Salle defending the Christian Schools as an “advocate of the cause of the public and of the interest of the poor infants.”¹³⁷ At another point, he was shown to be someone who did not see “the cause of the gratuitous schools as his, but as that of the public and the poor” and that, therefore, “considered that defending them was the responsibility of the magistrates, tutors, and defenders of the public good.”¹³⁸

De La Salle wanted a “public” school, that is (as has already been seen previously), open and accessible to all those who looked to receive a quality education and a serious initiation into doctrine and the Christian life. Even faced with the reality of the socio-economic factors required for admission to the school, he refused to make them the sole criterion. He did not think that the sons of the poor should be deprived of the advantages of living with children of more favorable social means.

The presence, in the Lasallian school, of some students of greater means along with the poor is a fact variously attested to. It is found in De La Salle’s correspondence, the correspondence where, writing to Brother Gabriel Drolin on April 27, 1705, he informed him: “They have bought a large house for our Brothers in Avignon that can accommodate 20 Brothers. The vice-legate [representative of the Holy See] loves them and is sending his page to their school.”¹³⁹

De La Salle also spoke of this category of students in the *Meditations*: “You will give an account to God whether you ... showed favoritism toward others [students] because they were rich [and] pleasant.”¹⁴⁰

The Writing Masters also witnessed to the fact that not only poor students studied in the Lasallian schools when they protested, before the competent authority, the fact that students who had the means to attend the paid schools were going to the Brothers for primary instruction.¹⁴¹

Equally the *Conduct* treated the presence of students in better economic conditions as a reality. For example, in establishing that among the functions of the Inspector of Schools was that of making sure that “there are books for every lesson, with as many as necessary for the poor who have none of their own. That there should also be enough writing paper for the impoverished writers who have none of their own.”¹⁴²

Indirectly, this implies that in the Lasallian school there were “readers” and “writers” who were not poor. But the *Conduct* also said it explicitly: in establishing the list of “Information Required of Parents for Students to Be Enrolled,” this text of school pedagogy and management established that

No student with wealthy parents should be allowed to come to the school beyond the first day without having the books needed for the lessons, or if in the writing class, without paper and an inkstand to do the writing.¹⁴³

But the occasional presence of some child who was not poor in the Lasallian school should not be exaggerated. If, on the one hand, there is the clear fact of De La Salle accepting in his school houses students of better economic conditions and better social level, this fact does not minimize the other, still more clear reality, that his work was directed at the popular class and that he wanted schools preferentially for the poor.

This concern and desire were a constant in his life, his teaching and his practice, in which the poor were abundantly and insistently present: “The instruction and education of the most wild and abandoned youth was the grand object of the zeal of the former canon of Rheims: and which the history of his life shows from the first chapter to the last.”¹⁴⁴

From the doctrinal point of view, the *Common Rules*, in their introduction, speak only of the Christian education of children in general as the end of the Institute.¹⁴⁵ But later it continues to explain that the foundation of this was seen in offering to the children of “the working class and the poor” “the instruction they need and a respectable and Christian education.”¹⁴⁶ Immediately after that, they affirmed the “importance and necessity” of this Institute precisely because it dedicated itself to making it possible that these children “of the working class and the poor” be able to have that which they did not have: accompaniment and good education.¹⁴⁷

De La Salle’s *Meditations* recalled the Brother’s task: “Every day you have poor children to instruct.”¹⁴⁸ Remembering nearly all of their students belonged to this category, and reading certain passages of his *Meditations*¹⁴⁹ one finds oneself thinking that De La Salle was in the same line as Saint Vincent de Paul, when the latter said: “The poor are my people.”

After De La Salle’s death, the papal bull that approved his Institute ratified these directions of the *Common Rules* and of the *Meditations*: “The Brothers should have, above all, the care of instructing the little ones, principally the poor, in that which corresponds to meritorious and Christian living.”¹⁵⁰

Concerning what this practice refers to, we know that, for De La Salle, preferential attention to the poor was more than a concern and a desire, it was a fact. Beyond caring primarily for children of the lower class (and therefore, “order”) in general, he frequently did it in places that were not easy to work, such as the neighborhood of Saint Marcel, in Paris, where, according to Louis-Sébastien Mercier, lived “the riffraff of Paris, the most poor, the most disruptive, the most undisciplined.”¹⁵¹ Blain testified unequivocally and with precision to the absolute prevalence of the poor in the Lasallian classes: “Among the hundred very poor children that come to the school” of De La Salle, there may “be three or four rich and comfortable.”¹⁵² De La Salle himself wrote, “Every day you are with the poor.”¹⁵³

Poutet affirmed that, even in the case of the children of Irish nobles taking refuge in France and being educated by De La Salle at a boarding school, “it was a question of families whose circumstances had placed them in conditions near misery.”¹⁵⁴ The only Lasallian institution dedicated to students who were not properly poor was the boarding school at Saint Yon, instituted to guarantee the support of the Lasallian novitiate in that same area.

Who were the “poor and artisans” whose children the *Common Rules* indicated were the part of the popular class to be cared for preferentially by De La Salle’s Christian Schools? Poutet¹⁵⁵ commented and clarified

In 1666, in De La Salle’s immediate environment, these two words encompassed two quite different realities. When De La Salle wrote, in the *Common Rules*, that the Brothers are dedicated to educating the children of the “artisans and the poor,” he is thinking clearly of these two social categories: workers, next to the small

businessmen and making a good living (artisans), and the people lacking all professional qualifications (the poor).

In other words and with some variation: artisans were professionals, normally linked to their guild and living on the result of their daily work; the poor were people who had no inherited property that allowed them to live beyond day-to-day and who resorted, not infrequently, to the charity of others.

As Fiévet pointed out, in the third article of the first chapter of the first part of the *Conduct* (“The Collection and Distribution for the Poor”), there was evidence of “the presence of very poor children (who do not have bread, the basic food of the time) and of others considered a little less poor, to be able [...] on certain occasions, to give alms of bread and fruit.”¹⁵⁶

It is also necessary to keep in mind that De La Salle was equally attentive to other types of poverty that his students may have suffered. The *Conduct* reiterated the recommendation of special attention and adaptive, particular care for those who suffered from one of those types of poverty: those who had more difficulties, the more backward, the weaker and slower, those needing more teaching help. Along with the recommendation, it suggested concrete forms of undertaking it: “While inspecting and correcting the writing of some of the students ... the teacher will watch particularly over those who most need watching, that is, the beginners and the negligent.”¹⁵⁷ During the catechism class, “a special effort will be made to question, much more often than the others, those whose minds are slow and dull and who have difficulty in remembering.”¹⁵⁸

To be truthful, in speaking of the attention to the most disadvantaged, it is necessary to recount also what the *Conduct* said regarding those who today are called “people with special needs,” when they are not close to dementia: “No children shall be admitted who are so retarded [developmentally delayed] and of such a low intelligence that they cannot learn anything and might thus distract others or cause trouble in the school.”¹⁵⁹ To be accurate, Anselme’s commentary should be added: “In that time there was no obligatory schooling. Nor did there exist special classes. The measures recommended were, therefore, the only practice.”¹⁶⁰

Meeting the Poor

De La Salle’s great dedication to Saint Francis de Sales, the notable bishop of Geneva, is known. In the *Introduction to the Devout Life*, written by this great spiritual master, De La Salle might have read this recommendation, which he would have subscribed to in large part, especially its beginning:

If you love the poor, you should take pleasure in often being with them, in seeing them in your house, in visiting them in their houses, in speaking with them, in having them near you in Church, in the streets and in other places. Be poor in speaking to them, conforming yourself to their language, as one equal to another; but be rich in extending a hand to them, having them share in what God has given you more than them.¹⁶¹

And why would he subscribe to the beginning of the text? Precisely because his concern and desire to reach the poor made him ask the Brothers not to wait for the disadvantaged to come looking for them, but to go out to meet them, where they were. Thus, Blain related that

At times, it would happen that some person distinguished by their quality or knowledge would want to convince M. De La Salle to choose for his schools a comfortable place in the area of Saint Germain, to save the Brothers the sacrifice of having to go every day to meet the children in the various far distant neighborhoods. But he would respond to them that it fell to the Brothers to go to the poor, considering that these certainly would not take the trouble to go a long distance to get instruction.¹⁶²

In the same sense of taking themselves to the neediest of the needy, De La Salle wrote to Brother Gabriel Drolin, on August 13, 1704:

It seems to me that this area of the city, where you can give instruction to poor children who lack it, is much better than being in a house, even if it were to instruct poor children who can find someone else to teach them.¹⁶³

Preferential Consideration and Love

As will be explained in another section,¹⁶⁴ the Lasallian teachers loved their students with concrete love, manifested by tangible signs of attention, care and creativity for their good. This love, in a general way, was identical for all of them: “They will love all their pupils tenderly.” “They will manifest equal affection for all pupils.”¹⁶⁵

This manifestation of “equal affection” seems to be affirmed in the intent not to consider or love the poor less because they were poor. The Inspector of Schools was to pay attention “that teachers apply themselves with as much, or even more, affection to teaching the poor as to teaching the rich; and that they neglect no one and show no preference for anyone.”¹⁶⁶ If, in some circumstance, it was necessary to consider and to love one of them specially, in the logic of the vision of the Lasallian Institute, it would be a poor student: “You must, according to the spirit of your Institute, have a much higher regard for them than for the rich.”¹⁶⁷ Additionally, “they will manifest ... even more [affection] for the poor than for the rich, because they are much more entrusted by their Institute with the former than with the latter.”¹⁶⁸

Blain noted that De La Salle followed this recommendation (from the *Common Rules* and De La Salle’s own *Meditations*) to the letter. For example, when, in Grenoble, he substituted for the Brother he sent to Paris to find out the situation of the Institute in the capital. Thus,

If he made some distinction between the students, it was in favor of the poorest. His predilection for them showed itself in the care that he took in helping them progress in reading and writing because – he would say – this was very necessary to them ... The zeal that he had for them also made him focus on them in the catechism that he explained to them every day; and, if among them some grew in his preference with relation to the others, they were the more backward....¹⁶⁹

An Accessible School, Made-to-Measure for the Poor

As seen in the previous topic, De La Salle made his popular school accessible to the poor, above all, by its essential and universal gratuity. More than this, as has also already been recalled, in the Christian Schools the poor children received not only gratuitous teaching on the part of the teachers, but also received the necessary materials so that they could attend them profitably.

In his effort to adapt the school to the poor, De La Salle abandoned the classical type of elementary education: “Thanks to him, since the end of the 17th century, methods of teaching and of education truly adapted to the needs of the children of the poor began to gain ground, not only in theory but in practice.”¹⁷⁰

For example, in *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*, also called more simply the *Rules of Decorum*, even writing for the public in general, he did not fail to have his poor students in mind. He went into the smallest details, obvious to the well-off, but unknown by the poor. In the elementary school he had the student learn to read in Latin only after fully mastering reading in the vernacular language and his teaching of Latin focused on reading. Thus, just as in the elementary school, also in the other Lasallian educational institutions – the Normal School, the Sunday School, and, obviously, the Boarding School at Saint Yon – Latin – its grammar, literature and style – was never integrated into the Lasallian curriculum as a subject for study. This was happening at a time when the practice of giving preference to French when first learning to read was far from a common practice and, to the contrary, met significant resistance, to the point that De La Salle had to write a memorandum to justify his opposition.

It is also interesting to observe how De La Salle, having mastered perfectly the language of Cicero, made no reference in this language in his writings destined for his religious educators. They, not needing Latin and, moreover, not authorized either to teach it or to teach in it, did not need to study it and were even prohibited from doing so, as well as from using it, if they had studied it previously: “The Brothers who have learned the Latin language will make no use of it after entering the Society and will act as if they did not know it; also, no Brother will be allowed to teach Latin to any person whatever within or outside the house.”¹⁷¹ This, in the opinion of historians of education, had much to do with De La Salle’s option for “popular education.” According to Guex¹⁷² and others,¹⁷³ not making his Brothers learn Latin and not allowing them to speak or teach it kept them more oriented toward the poor, devoted exclusively to the elementary teaching of the poor.

Popular Teachers

Just as, on the one hand, the students who attended the Lasallian schools were not admitted according to socio-economic criteria, likewise, admission to be a Brother did not depend on an origin linked to those factors: young men and adults of all means were admitted. Most of them coming from lower popular levels, frequently from the austere and crude environment of the rural area from which many of the parents of their students also came, their students felt by no means outclassed in their contacts with them.

Popular Culture

Into this chapter on “the popular” in Lasallian education, Prévot and Simoncelli introduce a little-noted element. For them, De La Salle presents not just a question of popular teaching but even more of a popular culture. In the words of Prévot, the teaching inaugurated by De La Salle “was not truly ‘primary’ in the restricted sense that he took the word, but he looked to organize a true popular culture.”¹⁷⁴ In Simoncelli’s words, the Lasallian Congregation and its founder undertook to bring about an “end with a new cultural sensibility, a popular culture, the humanism of work.”¹⁷⁵

Social Function

To motivate his teachers to carry out their ministry with zeal, De La Salle wrote them two meditations to call their attention to “the reward that those can expect even in this life who have instructed children and have fulfilled this duty well.”¹⁷⁶

In the first of these meditations, De La Salle showed that “even in this life,” the good teacher was gratified by “this great good” that he accomplished. In this text, he invited his followers and co-founders to pray, full of gratitude, for the fruits of the work of God brought about through them:

Look upon this, then, as a considerable reward that God gives you, even in this world, to see that religion and piety are increased among the faithful, especially among the working class and the poor, by means of the establishment of the schools that have been placed by God under your guidance.¹⁷⁷

Despite the nature of the text just quoted, it is known that De La Salle, in his educational work, was not content with aiming at religious and ecclesiastical ends. In the context in which he lived, he did not deny his school the essential importance of this goal, but he also saw the school as a social agent and had it exercise this function. Thus, just as he did not limit himself to religious formation, nor did he restrict himself to relief work. The very fact of his desire that his teaching institutions be called “Christian Schools” rather than Charity Schools was imbued with this message: the school, for him, was more than a work of mercy.

Among the choices that he was making in his journey was that of not working in hospitals. Why not? In Poutet’s opinion, it was not simply so that his teachers could preserve their physical and spiritual health, but also “to avoid the impression that the school is a charitable gift reserved for the poor in establishments rarely thought of by the rich.”¹⁷⁸

Nor did De La Salle accept Abbot Clement’s proposal of creating a boarding house for abandoned children in the charity hospital in the Paris neighborhood of Saint Victor,¹⁷⁹ because this did not fall within “the sphere of the Institute.”¹⁸⁰ In contrast, he accepted Clement’s invitation to establish a Seminary for Teachers for the Interior because that initiative corresponded fully to the nature of the Institute.

Results

With this, and with other realities already studied or to be studied – universal and gratuitous education of the most advanced type, education useful for civic and professional life, an efficient and effective school, formation for fraternal social relations – the Lasallian school carried out a work that transformed people and, as a result, bettered society.

It helped poor and abandoned children personally to improve their way of being and of carrying themselves. In Saint Sulpice, Paris, “the swamps of Grenouillère (the swampy region), the fair and market grounds, were seen (after the Lasallian presence) free of vagrant children, robbing and swearing, poorly educated and full of vices.”¹⁸¹ People stopped, many times, to observe with amazement, hundreds of them, by nature restless, unkempt, distracted and dissipated, walking in an orderly way, two by two, to Mass, entering the house of God and there remaining in silence and modesty¹⁸² that those watching them could not stop admiring.¹⁸³

Blain observed that the same type of changes and admiration for those changes were found in other places of Lasallian education, as in the school at Avignon or in various sectors of the boarding school at Saint Yon and in others that followed it after De La Salle’s death. In Rome, “the order, the silence, the modesty that was seen to reign in the Brothers’ classrooms, among a group of children naturally restless, inconsiderate, indocile, and nearly incapable of attention, was an ever-new spectacle for whoever witnessed it.”¹⁸⁴ And, with regard to the boarding school students,

Many changes have been observed and continue to be observed every day in the residents entrusted to the care of the Brothers! They came to them wild and corrupt, they leave them after such a metamorphosis that their parents do not recognize them and do not know how to praise God for their conversion.¹⁸⁵

Teaching the children of the poor reading, writing, arithmetic and manners; educating them as people of civic and Christian principles and practices; opening new cultural and professional horizons to them, De La Salle gave them visions of better living conditions, which made Hermosilla affirm that “putting the pen in the hands of the poor, it was not a weapon that he gave them – as Voltaire and La Chalotais said – but their own means of support, their own defense.”¹⁸⁶

De La Salle gave to them the possibility of breaking the barriers that confined them, breaking through the circle of social determinism that enclosed them and being able to aspire and arrive at new, higher levels of society. To speak of new and higher levels of society is to speak of social mobility, that is, of one of the forms of transformation, of reform of society.

As seen, it is true that De La Salle was not a theorist of reform, in the same way that in education he was not primarily a developer of pedagogical doctrine. But the Gospel inspiration for his popular and effective pedagogy certainly contributed, in the long run, to that reform. To say that his classrooms, fully taken advantage of, made it so that his students would be “capable of anything”¹⁸⁷ is to say that they would, especially through reading, be able to be aware of their fundamental rights to “liberty, equality, and fraternity.”

Sowing while Weeping

The Charity Schools were never seen as competing with anyone and, as a consequence, they could normally carry out their humble work in peace. De La Salle’s Christian Schools had a similar style to theirs. As was seen in the previous chapter, De La Salle’s schools, however, were the target of criticisms and opposition, embargos, confiscations and closings.

Why did this happen? Because, along with that which makes them similar to those houses of education reserved exclusively for the poor, De La Salle’s schools had distinctive characteristics, as pointed out previously or as will be seen. Wanting his schools to be “public”; passing on to the children of the poor the secrets of an art reserved, by privilege, to those initiated into it; promoting development of a more advanced curriculum for the poor that would allow them better conditions of social advancement, De La Salle disturbed the privileges of people such as the Writing Masters, produced a small but significant phenomenon of students migrating to his institutions and did not fail to make some contribution to the efforts of all those who, in some way, worked together to unbalance the sacred social stability.

Conclusion

To summarize, De La Salle was a man of the times and the world that produced him. Within that time and that world, however, he, for his part, collaborated to begin a time and world with new and different contours. He did not theorize about the society in which his life took place, nor did he turn his back on it by not participating in that which was contrary to the Gospel in that society. Spurred on by the Gospel, he left the nobility and the bourgeoisie for the reality of the popular world, created a circle of hope within that world for no small number and helped them move in the opposite direction from what he had done: an anti-Exodus to a life with more and better possibilities.

Assessment by Historians of Education

With regard to the themes dealt with in this chapter, some points of view of historians of education have already been noted. To the considerations and opinions presented, one would have to add that:

1. Chartier saw De La Salle's acceptance of the reigning social order of his time in the fact that the *Rules of Decorum* were a secular apprenticeship for a world "in which the gestures of courtesy had to translate, with clarity, to the [existing] social relationships."¹⁸⁸
2. De La Salle's change in socio-economic-cultural status is not captured or given the prominence in proportion to the importance that this fact took on in the life of the founder of the Christian Schools.
3. Recognition of De La Salle's dedication to the education and promotion of the popular classes is certainly the point on which there is most agreement amongst historians of education. Such promotion and education are even recognized and lifted up by those who have reservations or even opposing opinions on certain aspects of De La Salle's Institute and its founder as a whole.

Farga and Clause, for example, did not spare their criticism of various points of the work and pedagogy of the Institute, but both acknowledged De La Salle's work to attend in educational terms to the popular class. Farga offered the opinion that, from his point of view, the desire to have all children participate in instruction without differentiating their classes was, of the Lasallian endeavor, "the only aspect that deserves consideration."¹⁸⁹ Clause practically repeated him, in saying that, in his judgement, this was "De La Salle's only substantial novelty."¹⁹⁰
4. Authors see the popular nature of De La Salle's work picked up and continued by his Congregation, established for the popular school,¹⁹¹ which the Christian Schools function effectively in favor of the poor. Barnard could speak for all of them in saying that "any description of popular education in Europe would be incomplete if it did not give prominence to the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools."¹⁹²
5. Such educational attention to the most needy constituted, for Favre, evidence of De La Salle's personal vanguard status and on the vanguard of the politico-democratic field: "Joining the democratic currents then underway, Saint John Baptist de La Salle works, resolutely, in France, for the education of the poor."¹⁹³
6. There are authors who deny the social character of the Lasallian educational work, seeing it only as a work of religion and for religion. Thus, again, from Farga: the pedagogical recommendations of the Brothers "are without a social end."¹⁹⁴ However, this social character does not escape others, such as Fosseyeu, who affirmed that the founder of the Brothers, John Baptist de La Salle, "was aware of the social mission of the schools of charity."¹⁹⁵

P. Vincent was among those historians of education who positively affirmed more explicitly and categorically that this contribution was, at least for De La Salle, not merely social but also political:

Preparing good teachers for popular education was as generous and fruitful idea at the same time as it was truly democratic... Perhaps without intending it, in spreading education among the inferior classes, he was one of the authors of the (French) Revolution and one of those who worked most effectively for the proclamation of human equality.¹⁹⁶

7. Fiévet, speaking of the work of those who continued after De La Salle, said that

Voltaire and La Chalotais were not wrong in holding the “ignorant ones”¹⁹⁷ responsible for having participated in and making possible the transformation of this group of children into the start of a new social class, of the “evolved,” who rejected ever more collectively a subjugation based on an outmoded image of productivity by the masses of illiterate peasants, subject to the labor tax and subservient to their master’s desires.¹⁹⁸

8. Buisson, speaking of the social promotion to which the De La Salle Brothers’ schools contributed and of the opposition that they suffered from the learned elite saw what was at stake. For him, what was really at issue was the belief in inequality which most members of the privileged class did not want to renounce. This moral and intellectual promotion of the poor, this political and social liberation to which, sooner or later, the action of these schools would contribute, “was not to the liking of this part of the nobility and bourgeoisie that, in the 18th century, forgot, in the arms of a sensualist philosophy, the hard lessons of equality given by Christianization.”¹⁹⁹

Integral and Integrative Education

3

Integral Education

Introductory Data

Integral education is that which looks to form the person in the totality of their being. Although an ancient aspiration (for example, among the Romans: “Healthy mind in healthy body”), it is something more recent in its formulation.

Among the efforts to explain its nature and components is that of Froebel, for whom education should form the head, the heart and the hand. This notion of integral education depends, naturally on the religious-philosophical idea that one has of the human person. For Christians, for example, the whole, integral person is the intangible person (*in*: not; *tangere*: to touch, to take, to throw, to strike, to take from), that is, the original person according to God’s plan. Independent of these ideas and of the dimensions that one might include in so-called integral education, several factors are consistent: the human person, the subject and object of education, is constituted as one being; the dimensions contemplated within each of the ideas of the human person reflect on each other; and the health and global well-being of man and woman requires that these develop harmoniously in their totality, or risk being like someone crippled, having one leg more developed than the other.

Since the expression integral education was not in use in the 17th century, it is no surprise that De La Salle and his co-founders did not use it. It does not matter that they did not have benefit of the term, just as they did not use, and could not have used, other phrases proper to later educational science and practice, such as citizenry education, democratic education, popular education, evangelical-liberational education, whole education, permanent education, etc. What is important is that they lived this reality expressed in various ways. Indeed, the Lasallian school was, without using the term, already integral with regard to the time that the children spent with them: “From morning until evening.”²⁰⁰

Forms of Expression

Attention to the Whole Person

Again, without using these words, for De La Salle the notion of the common meaning of integral education was clearly present: the formation, the whole, harmonious development of the person in his various **dimensions**: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, ethical-moral, aesthetic, professional, spiritual (transcendent), etc. To discover how all of these were considered, one need only examine passages of the *Conduct* such as those that spoke of the data to collect and the information to give at the time of enrollment of the student and of the “Registers,”²⁰¹ especially “of the good and bad qualities of the student.”²⁰²

The Lasallian concern with the **physical** level begins with the care about the material infrastructure of classrooms. In general, they were to have “good daylight and good air.” “If possible,” there were to be “windows at both

ends of the classroom.”²⁰³ In particular, “the Inspector of Schools shall see that the writing tables are placed in full, clear light.”²⁰⁴

The rooms were to be clean. To that end, “all the classrooms are swept daily and sprinkled with water during the sweeping.”²⁰⁵

Moreover, it was necessary to provide for convenient hygiene facilities appropriate for children.²⁰⁶ About this not-so-small detail, in the *Conduct* it said that it fell to the Inspector of Schools to keep an eye on the students, among others things, so that they “not delay in the streets, not even to urinate. They must not attend to their necessities in the streets, either when coming to or on leaving school.”²⁰⁷

This concern for the physical was continued in the attention given to the health of the children. Among the directives relating to the conditions for enrollment was

No child shall be accepted if the child suffers from some communicable disease . . . If it should happen that any student already in school contracts one of these infirmities, the Community House’s doctor shall be asked to examine the child. If the malady is of this type and is curable, the child shall be sent home until the child recovers.²⁰⁸

The devotion to the physical level also showed itself in the concern for the clothing and individual posture of the student. Among the requirements of the parents, at the time of enrollment, it stated that “students should wear clean clothes, and should not come to school if they are not suitably and cleanly dressed; that hair should be properly combed and free from vermin”²⁰⁹ The *Rules of Decorum* directed that in general all adults were accustomed to always having good posture and the children should be made to acquire this habit.²¹⁰ Likewise, the *Conduct* directed that the teacher would be attentive that the students, when they wrote, positioned themselves appropriately, because not doing so “might make them very uncomfortable.”²¹¹

In the *Ancien Régime*, corporal punishment was practically habitual, as will be seen in due course. The *Conduct*, however, revealed the Lasallian care for the body at the moment of imposing such punishment. The general rule was that “no correction that could be harmful to the one who is to receive it must ever be administered.”²¹² Thus, for example, “teachers must be very careful not to strike them on any place where they may have any sore or injury, lest it worsen.”²¹³ The general norm was applied in particular in the use of the ferule: employing it, one should “foresee the injuries that might arise from this form of correction and to try to avoid them.”²¹⁴ Still more concretely: “The left hand should be struck, especially in the case of students in the writing class. This is done so as not to make the right hand heavy; such would be a great obstacle in writing.”²¹⁵ In line with these same concerns was the direction that the *Conduct* gave about what to do with an object that a student was playing with, that is, distracting himself during class: The teacher had it taken away. And, at the end of class, he returned it to the student, “unless the teacher considers that it would be harmful.”²¹⁶

Concerning the physical, there was also the question of games. In De La Salle’s time, there was no interval between lessons, nor any playground properly speaking and, therefore, no games in the elementary school during the daily school routine. Nonetheless, the students read, in the *Rules of Decorum*,²¹⁷ De La Salle’s recommendation that it was preferable to practice outside games, which involved physical movement, rather than table games, which favored sedentariness. Additionally, one should not forget the physical exercise represented by the fact that the children came and went from school, always on foot, four times a day.

From the **intellectual** point of view it is necessary to keep in mind at this point something that will be developed more fully later,²¹⁸ that is, the seriousness and systematic manner with which De La Salle wanted the content of primary education studied and its skills practiced and the rigor which he required in evaluating their acquisition. For example, with regard to the basic skill of reading and speaking, he required accuracy, clarity and naturalness. Concerning accuracy, what he wrote for the general public also applied to his students: “You must especially avoid improper expressions that are not good French and that violate the purity of the language. Although it is not appropriate to speak in terms and expressions that are too remote from common usage, you also ought to avoid using slang, which some people use only because they do not pay enough attention to the way they speak.” Regarding “not good French,” it was important to be attentive, among other things, to the many regional accents.²¹⁹

It is true that, on the one hand, De La Salle and his teachers, according to the practice of their time, gave great importance to memorization for effecting the acquisition of knowledge, especially necessary in essentially oral civilizations, as was that of the poor in the 17th century. On the other hand, they gave no small value to intelligent learning, along the lines of what Saint Thomas Aquinas understood by “teaching”: “bringing about knowledge in another person, helping them to use their reason.”²²⁰ For example, to begin instruction in reading Latin, the student was first to know how to read in French not only “perfectly and clearly,” but also “intelligently,”²²¹ understanding what they read. Morales observed, moreover, that “the processes of learning were accompanied by the use of reason. They invited students to understand what they were doing during the process.”²²² Lauraire noted that the learning process included the creation of habits or mechanisms, the acquisition of skills, but that “this acquisition is always united to explanations that help the student understand what he should ask of himself and what he should do: it dealt, therefore, with an intelligent assimilation.”²²³

In teaching writing, for example, the teacher was to work at teaching the student to understand how to execute the various hand movements and how to hold the pen well. In reading Latin, he was to help them understand, above all, that – different from what happens in French – in this classical language “all the letters are pronounced.” When the student did his arithmetic lesson, the teacher was to ask him various questions so that he understood and retained the material better. The teacher was not to work for the student simply to understand what was taught; he was also to take care to find out what he truly understood. In examining the student’s work, he was to ask questions that exercise the entire intellect (“complete intelligence”).²²⁴

All this was undertaken in a positive sense. The *Conduct* also described what did not constitute intelligent learning, saying that the student should not learn things by rote. Even before the student began studying in the Lasallian school, at the time of enrollment, the Director “shall have the student read and spell something in French or in Latin, using a book which is not commonly known, in order to determine whether the student is not simply reciting something learned by heart.”²²⁵ While they initially, even before using a primer, read letters from cards, they were invited, at times, to do so in the order they appeared and, at other times, to jump around. Why? “So that they will not be learned only by rote,”²²⁶ from memory or guessing. Situated within the pedagogical conventions of the time, the *Conduct* had no doubts about affirming that the foundation of reading was knowing perfectly how to spell and sound out words clearly. And, again, why? “Without this, it is impossible for a child ever to read anything with understanding and not by rote.”²²⁷

In the *Conduct* this intelligent learning was translated and implemented in numerous and varied ways: through observation, discovery, the search for reasons and the meaning of things.

First, through the practice of observing, seeing and perceiving. When a student needed to learn to hold the pen to write, the teacher was to show him how to do this. The teacher would have the student “observe everything that is necessary” for that operation to be successful. Afterwards, “he will have him observe the errors he may have made” in learning. In a similar way, when the student needed to learn the correct way to write the letters and syllables and of connecting them in writing, the teacher was to have him observe how the teacher himself wrote and drew them, so that afterwards the student could correct those that were done wrong.²²⁸

Next, the practice of discovery. Poutet addressed it in referring to the Lasallian mode of catechizing. During catechesis, the teacher, after stating a truth to remember, asked questions and sub-questions about it. The object of some of the questions, according to Poutet “is to discover the deep sense, or the multiple senses of the words and expressions used, and then to go further, moving on to looking for the causes and the consequences of the principles that justify a practice and the practices that flow from the principles.”²²⁹

Poutet, in this same text, wrote that, for De La Salle, “parroting was not the goal.”²³⁰ In that regard, he copied the passage in which the *Conduct* directed the teacher on how to correct the student’s arithmetic:

The teacher will explain why anything is incorrect. Concerning addition, the teacher will, for example, ask them: “Why do we begin with *deniers*?” “Why do we reduce the *deniers* to *sols* and the *sols* to *livres*?” The teacher will ask other similar questions, as needed, and will give the students a full explanation.²³¹

In teaching written symbols, the teacher was not only to have the students know them, but also to know “the reasons for all these things.” In teaching vowels and consonants, he was to show them to the pupils and, once again,

give the reason why some are called vowels and others consonants. Even punishment was never to be irrational. In administering it, the teacher had to make clear to the student the reason or reasons for it.²³² Additionally, there was a third way of learning content intelligently: the teacher explaining and the student simply catching on to the reasons for the teaching, learning or doing.

The practice recommended for explaining the meaning of words used and making sure the meaning was understood followed the same line. Thus, in showing the student the way to trim the pen, the teacher was to teach him the meaning of each of the terms that were used in doing so and afterwards ask him for an explanation of each of them.²³³ Along similar lines was the recommendation that the teacher present material with meaning and structure, and require that material presented by the student also have those qualities. The prescription that, to the students using the third book, “two or three pages will be given for a lesson each time, from one complete idea to another,”²³⁴ moved in the same direction, as did many of the requirements referring to the responses that the student gave to the teacher’s questions during catechism class. They were to be complete, make perfect sense and include the question in the answer.

Still from the intellectual point of view, there were passages in the *Conduct* that presented the act of learning itself as a whole action, resulting from the sum of three operations which should be practiced when possible so that learning happened. These operations were: comprehending, assimilating (fixing, remembering) and applying: “In order to make the students **understand, retain, and practice** all that pertains to the proper way of trimming pens, teachers will themselves demonstrate trimming on three successive days.”²³⁵

In a time in which the demonstration of feelings and emotions was constrained and formal, at least in ecclesiastical circles, De La Salle did not teach much about how to develop the **emotional** dimension. But there is no doubt that the Lasallian school was a place where children were to feel tenderly and concretely loved.²³⁶ Blain testified to how the students, through gestures and words, demonstrated affection for their teachers.²³⁷

Under the **social** aspect, there was an entire complex of related practices to be cultivated in the Lasallian school.²³⁸ The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* particularly encouraged teachers to stimulate in their students a love that manifested itself concretely, showing reciprocal concern: that the children be refined and gentle with others, that they forgive one another, etc.²³⁹ A fundamental point in these *Meditations* was the insistence on sincerity and truth in relationships, assuming first that they were positive: “You must, therefore, lead them with the same zeal to renounce lying and to speak the truth.”²⁴⁰

The *Conduct* was replete with pointers to orient students toward respect and courtesy in contacts with others and in the various acts of the daily schedule. The Inspector of Schools took care that the students “courteously greet decent people, especially the clergy, religious, their teachers, and people in authority”²⁴¹ that they met in the street. The “Visitors of the Absent Students” were advised, in their visits to the families, to always speak with people (the parents) “in a very educated way” and to greet them “on behalf of the teacher.”²⁴² There was no lack of encouragement for the cultivation of gratitude as both sentiment and relational practice, expressed, among other ways, by prayer for the intentions of benefactors,²⁴³ beginning with classroom colleagues to whom a favor was owed.

Among the acts that students should get used to doing with good manners was that of eating. From the parents’ first contact with the school, at the time of the interview for enrollment, they were to be advised that as students, their children would eat breakfast at school, among other reasons, “in order that they can be taught how to eat in a Christian and polite manner.”²⁴⁴ Likewise, the students, “must be made to understand that it is desirable that they eat in school in order to teach them to eat with propriety, with decorum, and in a polite manner.”²⁴⁵ The directions on how to conduct oneself at meals was the longest chapter in the *Rules of Decorum and Civility*, a work which was itself proof of the importance that De La Salle gave to *savoir-vivre*²⁴⁶ and to learning it. These *Rules*, which were a great editorial success, were used by Lasallian students at the eighth level of reading: “When the students both know how to read French perfectly and are in the third level of Latin reading, they will be taught to write and they will also be taught to read the book, *Règles de la Bienséance et de la Civilité chrétienne*.”²⁴⁷

The **ethical-moral** dimension was also developed in the Lasallian school. The student was helped to form a right conscience through being taught what is objectively evil or good, sin or virtue; to cultivate a self-awareness through the perception of his own faults and defects, whether in learning school material or other domains; to

know his duties as a Christian and specifically those as a student; and to create a sense of duty in general and to make a self-examination of the fulfillment of the obligations that constitute it.²⁴⁸ He was initiated into a complex of dispositions and attitudes, values and practices, such as the discipline of life (self-control, command over his own body, order in movement, etc.); the morally sound life (teachers were allowed, for example, to retain “bad or suspected books, which they will bring to the Brother Director to examine or have examined”²⁴⁹); and living the “true practices” of the Gospel.²⁵⁰

As is known, liberty and responsibility hold an essential role in the moral life. The “liberty” in which De La Salle wanted students to be grounded was that “of children of God,” so that they not be imprisoned by the “snare of the demon,”²⁵¹ by the bondage of sin.

This liberty corresponded closely to responsibility and personal initiative. It is true that the word responsibility does not appear in De La Salle’s writings (the *Lasallian Vocabulary* only notes the word responsible and, even then, only three times). But responsibility was very present as a living practice: the “offices” carried out in the Lasallian school, beyond other usefulness, were also a school of responsibility. Some of them were relatively ordinary, as with the “First Student in the Bench,” who took attendance and reported students missing from their bench. Others are surprising, such as the “Visitor of the Absent Students,” charged with finding out and reporting the reasons for absences and of acting as “good Samaritan” to the sick, or of “Keeper of the School Key” who, beyond keeping the school key and opening and closing school – which was far from common – also took care of the way that the sweepers cleaned the floor and – an even more unexpected assignment – “will also be responsible for everything in the school, and must take care that nothing is carried away.”²⁵² Beyond the implementation of the “offices,” the practice of examination of conscience and other elements integrated into the daily school activities also tended to awaken and strengthen the feeling and the exercise of responsibility: “Pedagogically, it obviously results, through this combination of reflections, of examinations, of moments of recollection, that there develops, beyond the scholarly work in a Lasallian school, a psychological action of developing each student’s sense of responsibility.”²⁵³

Stimulation of personal initiative was not as present in the origins of Lasallian pedagogy as would be wished today. There were, however, passages that did speak of it, such as those that said, “On Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, instead of correcting the writing, the teacher will correct the examples which the students of arithmetic have done by themselves,” or that in Church, “The students will be trained to take their respective places without the teacher’s being obliged to attend to them,” or “From time to time, the Visitors shall call on the sick students from the area for which they have been given charge,” not only “according to the instructions given them by the teacher,” but also “on their own initiative.”²⁵⁴

What of the **aesthetic**, artistic dimension? This area, too, was less honored in the Lasallian curriculum, as was the case in other schools of the time. It is true that there was concern for carefulness in schoolwork, shown in practices such as taking home copies made as calligraphy exercises to make clean copies of them.²⁵⁵ There was also instruction in writing as an art, through calligraphy.

One thing that merits further explanation in the aesthetic dimension is the use of song in the Lasallian school. De La Salle knew the power and utility of singing in general: “Songs can move you with the spirit they contain more strongly than do mere words.” Singing was not just allowed, it was understood to “relax your mind in a very agreeable and most innocent manner.”²⁵⁶ He recalled Saint Paul’s recommendation in writing to the Christians that they should sing “psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). Sing these with all your heart and with great affection, for they contain the praises of God.” And for his part, he added, “It ought also to be a great pleasure and a genuine recreation for Christians to bless and to praise God in this way in their hearts.”²⁵⁷

Concerning the teaching and educational use of spiritual hymns, he first said that the Church “recommends that parents teach them [the canticles] to their children.” In the school, without ignoring or detracting from the hymns’ educational power to calm the environment, he used them not for artistic ends, but for essentially religious purposes: have the students sing them “to ask the assistance of the Holy Spirit before catechism,” to ask him for “the enlightenment needed to understand the truths they would be taught” in this lesson “and the grace to put them into practice,” and, afterwards, have them sing to etch in their memory good ideas, that Christians “should believe and do in order to be saved.”²⁵⁸

At that time, Gregorian chant, or choral chant, was used for religious ceremonies. Initially, as Poutet recalled, De La Salle saw it

as a normal subject of study for his followers. These, or at least the most gifted among them, should know it sufficiently to be able to teach it to the student-teachers going to schools in a rural area. But later, they set chant aside and their studies developed in other directions more useful professionally to children of the city.²⁵⁹

For instruction in this type of singing, which was necessary for the lay educators that they prepared at the Seminary for Teachers of the Interior, the possibility was proposed, in 1709, of their instruction falling to the care of a Spiritan priest.

Lasallian concern and activity related to the **professional** preparation of students will be addressed in the next chapter.²⁶⁰

The transcendent, **spiritual** dimension was essential for De La Salle. With apologies for redundancy, it is transcendent. It is in the beginning, the middle and the end of the Christian School.²⁶¹

Regarding the first part on this characteristic of Lasallian education, it is above all appropriate to observe that, in more than one passage of his writings, De La Salle saw in the person of the student someone who, as a whole, was capable and should be helped to understand how to love and to practice that which he was taught:

The truths that the Holy Spirit teaches to those who receive him are the maxims found in the holy Gospel. He helps them to **understand** these maxims and to **take them to heart**, and he leads them **to live and to act** in accordance with them.²⁶²

and

This is why you must ask him earnestly that all your instructions be given life by his Spirit and draw all their power from him. Just as he is the one who enlightens everyone coming into the world, he is also the one who **enlightens** the minds of your students and leads them **to love and practice** the good that you teach them.²⁶³

These same complementary and interdependent operations were equally the object of his catechism lessons, according to which, the Christian's task in this world was to **know** God through faith, and **to love him**, which was shown primarily by **carrying out** his commands. To which, in these texts, De La Salle added the means to carry out these duties: the sacraments and prayer.²⁶⁴

The joint cultivation of these elements was, likewise, the Lasallian student's object of attention, daily, from the moment his schoolwork began. In the prayer at the beginning of activities, after the sign of the cross, of the remembrance of the presence of God and of the invocation of the Holy Spirit, he prayed: "O my Savior Jesus ... teach me, I beg you, to know, love, and serve you. I have come to school to learn [this]."²⁶⁵

The Conjunction of Theory and Practice

Another way in which De La Salle expressed the wholeness of the educational act was the conjunction he frequently made between theory and practice. Religion teaches truths to learn and life to live: for the holy Apostles, "it would have been of little use if [they] had instructed the first Christians in the essential truths of our religion and did not lead them to live the Christian way of life," and of his teachers he asked, "What would it benefit you, then, to teach your disciples the truths of the faith if you do not teach them to practice good works?"²⁶⁶

Formation of the Citizen and the Christian

At its best, in speaking of "education linked to life" and of "Christian education," the formation of the Lasallian student was approached as much from one as from the other of these dimensions of his life. This formulation used by De La Salle to express his desire that the student be educated integrally was expressed theoretically in the meditation that he wrote for the Feast of Saint Louis, King of France:

In your work you ought to unite zeal for the good of the Church with zeal for the good of the nation of which your disciples are beginning to be and one day ought to be perfect members. You will procure the good of the Church by making them true Christians, docile to the truths of faith and to the maxims of the holy Gospel.

You will procure the good of the nation by teaching them how to read and write and everything else that pertains to your ministry with regard to exterior things.²⁶⁷

The commitment to bring about such formation in practice appeared, for example, in the contract signed on September 22, 1685, between De La Salle and the Duke of Mazarin, related to the Seminary for Teachers of the Interior, which anticipated that “sacred doctrine and Christian morality and the first principles of civil life” would be included in the curriculum.²⁶⁸

Secular Education Valued with Christian Instruction

In the recently cited meditation, De La Salle, after reminding his teachers of the commitment to prepare the citizen, through care with regard to “exterior formation,” added, “but piety [that is, the religious dimension] must be joined to exterior things [that is, the secular domain]; otherwise, your work would be of little use.”²⁶⁹

There was, however, an appreciable difference between De La Salle and the Christian educators and authorities of his time, as a whole, regarding the relationship between the religious and secular with regard to educational content. The elementary school of that time did not have solely an essentially religious purpose. Not infrequently, however, the religious purpose served to relativize the intrinsic value of the secular subject matter, which they sometimes used as an instrument to attract students to religious education. This reality was so characteristic of education in De La Salle’s time that it seems necessary to give to readers in the 21st century the following examples to prove and illustrate it.

According to article 9 of the royal declaration of December 13, 1698 (referred to earlier), by which the children of Protestants were required to attend school, they first went to Mass, catechism and prayers. Only afterwards, were “reading and, even writing, for those who need it” undertaken.²⁷⁰

At one time, the *chantry* of Paris intended that the Charity Schools, connected, as is already known, to the parishes and dependent on the pastors, be controlled by him. The pastors, however, sent a memorandum against this aspiration to the capital’s Parliament.²⁷¹ On what did they base their request? That, for them, the Charity Schools were “supplements to catechesis.”²⁷² Jean Ferté, a contemporary of De La Salle, practically repeated this argument when he wrote that the activity the school could undertake was “to contribute to completing the doctrinal and liturgical formation of children, a task which by right” – and, it could be added, by obligation – “falls to the pastor.”²⁷³

The *Bull* granted by Pope Paul V to the Ursulines of Toulouse in 1616 obliged them

to dedicate themselves gratuitously to the education of young women, primarily teaching them with piety and virtue, what is worthy of a Christian virgin, the way to examine their consciences, of confessing sins, of receiving communion, of hearing the holy Mass, of praying to God, of reciting the rosary, of meditation and reading spiritual books, of singing hymns, of avoiding the vices and the occasion of vice, of carrying out works of mercy, of managing a household, and finally of doing all the acts appropriate to a good Christian; ... in the second place, **to encourage them to attend this Institution with greater enthusiasm** and to stay away from the heretical schools, to teach them to read, to write, to do various types of needlework; in all, all types of work worthy of and appropriate for a well-educated young woman.²⁷⁴

Something similar happened with Nicolas Roland, the founding canon of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus of Rheims (who made De La Salle the executor of his will), when he wrote *The Twelve Pillars of the Institute of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, which They Should Have Permanently in Their Spirit to Meditate on and in Their Hearts to Practice*. Poutet, commenting on this text stated that “when Roland’s ‘twelve pillars’ insist on zeal ‘for the instruction of the young,’ the term ‘instruction’ (by Roland), takes on, first of all, the sense of religious instruction. The context, as well as the totality of his writings, makes clear that secular education is not especially envisioned.”²⁷⁵

Saint Peter Fourier was one of the great educators of the times and the founder of the Daughters of Notre Dame, most often known as the Sisters of Notre Dame. Along with the complete religious theoretical and practical array, they also taught reading, writing and the domestic arts, such as needlework. Why did they teach these

elements in the curriculum? The founder of the Sisters responded: among other reasons, because these secular subjects served “as bait to attract the young ladies to our schools, to Christian doctrine and piety.”²⁷⁶

Blain, De La Salle’s principal biographer, shared this way of thinking when he wrote

To worldly men it was necessary to give them motivation that would interest them in taking their children in hand, and encountering the secret of inculcating in them the knowledge of salvation, teaching them gratuitously that to which they aspire. This because the necessity, the excellence, and the benefit of Christian doctrine spoke little to the parents and their children. Such that, to make them like it, it was necessary to clothe it and envelope it in the bait of teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic.²⁷⁷

De La Salle never used this language of instrumentalizing secular subjects as a strategy to attract children to religious instruction. Such secular subjects were not seen by him as a mere adjunct to the substantive reality of religious instruction. For him, both domains were important, integral to the very duty of the educator: “You will give an account . . . whether you preferred to teach secular subjects, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, although you must not neglect these, for they are strictly required of you.”²⁷⁸

The entire *Conduct* revealed this simultaneous concern: that of offering adapted and attractive catechesis, but also of developing competent instruction in reading, handwriting, writing, arithmetic and good manners, all secular subjects.

Blain’s testimony confirmed that this Lasallian concern and desire were well-placed. De La Salle “did not separate instruction from education, nor piety from knowledge . . . According to the approach of the Brothers, the young people encountered . . . education united to instruction.”²⁷⁹ This affirmation by Blain calls for a parenthetical remark to clarify that, for the others of the time, including De La Salle, the word “instruct” was practically always used in the sense that Roland employed it in his *Twelve Pillars*, that is, as a synonym for teaching Christian doctrine, the truths of Christianity. To go to instruction was “to go to CCD,” as we often say. This was, therefore, the sense that De La Salle had in mind when he wrote sentences such as: “[Saint Francis Xavier] especially had such great zeal for the instruction of children [in Paris] (which had been inspired in him by Saint Ignatius) that he went about in the streets ringing a little bell to call them to catechism [instruct them];”²⁸⁰ and “the children who come to you either have not had any instruction and have been taught the wrong things or, if they have received some good lessons, bad companions or their own bad habits have prevented them from benefiting.”²⁸¹ That meaning was equally emphasized by contrast, when De La Salle – as well as Blain, in the cited text – set the term education (concerning the teaching of other content and ways of life to practice, or, as he had said in the mediation on Saint Louis, referring to “everything else that pertains to your ministry with regard to exterior things”²⁸²): “Regard the children whom God has entrusted to you as children of God. Have much more solicitude for their education and instruction than you would have for the children of a king.”²⁸³

To conclude, in the interest of accuracy and while still affirming the substantial place of the secular in his education, it must be said that De La Salle, within his context and the purpose of his school, maintained a clear hierarchy, giving highest priority to the religious content: “Have you been concerned that your disciples be instructed in their religion? This is your principal obligation.”²⁸⁴

To which could be added that, in order to guarantee that catechism class (the principle moment in which religion was explained) be taught, De La Salle allowed other less essential principles and practices be set aside. Thus, what he wrote to Brother Gabriel Drolin, who was obliged to teach catechism in the Church while in Rome, contrary to Lasallian direction, is very illustrative:

With regard to catechism, it seems to me appropriate and important that you teach it in your school. Is a schoolteacher forbidden to teach his students catechism in his school? I do not like our Brothers to teach catechism in Church; however, if it is forbidden to do so in school, it is better to do it in Church than not to do it at all.²⁸⁵

Safeguard everything. If that is not possible, safeguard the essential.

All-Encompassing Evaluation and Reward

Lasallian evaluation was also integral. It is clear that the student, in order to be promoted, should demonstrate improvement in studies, or capacity, to use the language of the *Conduct*. However, in a time when punctuality and especially diligence were a serious problem for the poor, these points were also evaluation criteria in regard to promotion of the student, his positive response in the intellectual arena not being sufficient. He had to be studious and interested in class and he had to be pious and modest, which meant, beyond concentration in reciting, having the desired behavior. Two of these requirements are seen in the following text:

Those who lack modesty and piety or who show themselves lazy and neglectful in studying and in following the lesson shall be promoted only with great hesitancy; they shall be examined with greater rigor and exactness than the others. If in the succeeding month they fall back into their old faults, they shall not be promoted on the next occasion, no matter how capable they may be.²⁸⁶

Along with verification of the threefold criteria of study, comportment and the student's faithfulness in attending school, the *Conduct* allowed an overall evaluation of him, analyzing, at once, the quantity and quality of his learning, or the assimilation of information and of the formation given to him. This evaluation can be seen as all-encompassing especially because the teachers as well as the students were systematically evaluated. Evaluation of the teachers fell to the Inspector of Schools who, for that task, had at his disposal pages of qualities that he was to observe in them.²⁸⁷

This same wholeness of criteria was used for rewards, that is, giving ordinary and extraordinary rewards to the Lasallian students: "There are three kinds of rewards which will be given in the schools: 1) rewards for piety, 2) rewards for ability, and 3) rewards for assiduity."²⁸⁸

Teaching for Good Living

Finally, it is difficult to find another educator or pedagogue who expressed, in a more all-encompassing, concise, essential and rich way, what an integral education should be than when De La Salle, in the beginning of the *Common Rules*, wrote that "it is for this purpose the Brothers conduct schools, that having the children under their care from morning until evening, these teachers may be able to teach them **to live a good life**."²⁸⁹

In the sociological descriptions of reality that De La Salle gave in various texts, he painted a picture of the "bad living" (poverty, ignorance, lack of job preparation, acquisition of vices) to which children were accustomed since infancy, "bad living" and "dire consequences" that the Christian Schools looked to prevent and from which they want to liberate them, to teach them the opposite: "good living."²⁹⁰

Integrative Education

Unity and Meaning

For De La Salle, it was not enough that education be integral, that is, that it attend to all the dimensions of the person of the student; accomplish understanding, assimilation and action; bring together theory and practice; prepare the citizen and the Christian; value secular instruction along with Christian instruction; in all, that it teach "good living."

More important than being integral, it should be integrative.

De La Salle's recognition of the value of the secular, its soundness vis-à-vis the religious, was recounted above. Evidence of that value is found in texts such as the *Syllabary* that he wrote:

Concerning the similar traditional works intended for the preparation of children for reading the official language of the Church and the Latin prayers of the Christian, in a context which would not allow the celebration of the Mass and of Vespers except in Latin, the *French Syllabary* of John Baptist de La Salle concerns itself, first, with an immediate, every-day, social usefulness: to begin reading in the mother language without worrying directly with the necessities specific to the religious offices.²⁹¹

De La Salle did not confuse the secular, the soundness of which he accepted, with the religious, nor did he dissociate it from the religious. While privileging the religious over the secular, for him they were complementary aspects of the one divine creation. For the founder of the Christian Schools, this complementarity and even overlap existed in the first place because he materially integrated catechesis and secular subjects, each taught and learned in the same physical space. In his letter to Brother Gabriel Drolin cited above, De La Salle expressed his aversion to teaching catechism in the Church, and his point of view that it is appropriate and important that it be taught in the school. Previously, he had written to the same Brother: “The best thing would be if you could have a school where you are now teaching catechism.”²⁹² Later he would return to give his thoughts on the topic, reminding a Brother Director that “teaching catechism in a Church is contrary to our *Rule*.”²⁹³

With this, De La Salle was saying that, rather than being isolated, it was better that catechism be taught within the whole framework of teaching, as was the practice in all Lasallian schools. It is attention-grabbing and surprising to see that, three hundred years ago, a priest such as De La Salle recognized as faithful to the Church and in a time in which it was normal to give catechism in the Church, would oppose that practice. How to explain this position that was apparently unusual at that time?

On the one hand, there is an historical reason. The nascent Lasallian Community was a new type of male religious group in the Church. It was a congregation of religious laymen that, with the exception of its first superior, De La Salle himself, did not allow priests in its midst, contrary to the traditional male religious orders existing up to that time. It needed, therefore, to defend its identity, create its image, as would be said today; thus, De La Salle’s pledge to advocate for the use, by the Brothers, of clothing that would distinguish them both from the simple lay people as well as from the priests, and the prohibition of them carrying out tasks that could make them seem like priests (such as giving catechesis in the Church):

It does not seem right to give a purely clerical garb to laymen, such as the members of this Community of the Christian Schools, who have not pursued a classical education – and never will – and who neither can nor do perform priestly functions or wear a surplice in Church²⁹⁴

and

They cannot be priests or aspire to the ecclesiastical state, or even sing, wear a surplice, or exercise any function in Church except to serve low Mass.²⁹⁵

On the other hand, independent of whether De La Salle explicitly proposed it or not, the practice of giving catechesis in the classroom presented an advantage, that of intuitively putting in the student’s mind the idea that catechesis was not just a Church matter, such that the child should not only learn to be a Christian in the Church and when he was in the Church, but that he should be a Christian in all places and at all times. In the same place where he learned to know a whole set of realities, through various subjects of instruction, he also learned to judge them rightly according to the dictates of the Gospel, and to learn to use them appropriately according to God’s design. Likewise, in the same room where he cemented relationships with his academic colleagues, he learned how to live in a way proper to the children of God, living faith, culture and life in an integrative way.

Such practice would also allow the Christian School to be seen as a whole and not merely as a catechism class that educated one in Christian thinking, judgment, action and rituals, such that the religious classroom came to complete a whole complex of Christian education. In the Lasallian school, such a class would effectively interweave itself and combine not only a number of actions of a religious type (prayer, Mass, etc.) but also others of a secular type (learning reading, writing, and arithmetic; eating breakfast and afternoon snack). At times, these two types of activities happened not only in the same room, but in the same act. Evidence of that integration is found in the breakfast and afternoon snacks during which the children, at the same time as they ate, reviewed lessons; developed good manners, eating like an educated person; learned to do so like Christians, blessing the food before and giving thanks for it afterwards; and were educated in Christian charity by sharing part of their food with the more needy.

This relational, integrative motion was neither merely sequential nor simultaneous. At times, they went in the opposite direction. There was a going back and forth between the religious and the secular, as happened with

the reading texts De La Salle proposed in his schools. After having, at the beginning of the school cycle, made the reading secular, using the French syllabary in place of the psalter, at the end of the academic year a sort of Christianization of reading happened, putting the *Duties of a Christian* in the hands of the students at the sixth level of reading, and the *Rules of Decorum* in those at the eighth level; *Rules* which, while having, by their nature, a secular role (perfecting the students' current reading and teaching them to conduct themselves decorously and like an educated person with others), were, for De La Salle, in a certain way, "baptized," through the prism of faith through which he suggested they be seen and lived.

Moreover, De La Salle did not want that there merely be a material and external, spatial and temporal, integrative relationship between the religious and the secular. He wanted there to be an intimate internal link between them. Fundamental. So indestructible that it made of them two inseparable sides of a single coin.²⁹⁶ He wanted a process of integration happening within each student, just as within each Christian. He set his heart on forging a unity of what one learned and how one developed in education. Lastly, he wanted to furnish the student with something that, beyond unity, gave meaning to all that he was taught and all that he learned and all that he came to be through education.

In other words, it is as though De La Salle asked: what was achieved through educational work, through physical growth, through intellectual development, through ethical behavior, social relationship, and professional training, if it did not assist in discovering the purpose of all that? If it did not point the student to the purpose for which mental abilities were exercised, behaviors learned, human relations carried out, and a profession trained for? To what end? To build – with apologies for the anachronism – technically perfect but perfectly disoriented robots?

Who were to give this interior unity and this meaning of the children and the transformations that education elicits? Such unity and meaning are guaranteed by a complex of philosophical-religious principles which are adhered to in an essential way. In the case of Christianity, such principles are fundamentally inspired by the life and word of Jesus Christ, the perfect, integral, original man, whose stature, particularly ethical and spiritual, one tries to achieve.

In Lasallian language, this principle of unification and of meaning is called, for Christians, the Christian spirit and, for De La Salle's Brothers, the spirit of faith. This faith which, for the Christian and the Lasallian, gives unity and meaning, is a whole, integrated act of the person, an act which involves him or her entirely.

Men and women should not only *love* with their whole mind, whole heart and whole strength.²⁹⁷ De La Salle taught that the human person should also *believe* with their whole mind, whole heart and whole strength. Thus, the faith to be taught should touch and involve the totality of the person. Men and women should also believe as beings at once intelligent, loving and active. Faith, if true, is, in the first place, a kind of symbolic vision. It makes secular things, without losing their secular nature, come to be considered in a new and different light, to be resig-nified, requalified. De La Salle expressed this by saying that for people who have the spirit of Christianity, or the spirit of faith, the first thing that they do is "to see everything through the eyes of faith."²⁹⁸

This new vision was very present not only in De La Salle's writings with a spiritual stamp, such as the *Short Treatises*, the *Common Rules* and the *Meditations*. It also appeared in the pedagogical texts, such as the *Conduct* and the *Rules of Decorum*, *Rules* in which De La Salle – to repeat – "Christianized" good manners. Indeed, the *Rules of Decorum* began with the following statement:

It is surprising that most Christians look upon decorum and politeness as merely human and worldly qualities and do not think of raising their minds to any higher views by considering them as virtues that have reference to God, to their neighbor, and to themselves. This illustrates very well how little true Christianity is found in the world and how few among those who live in the world are guided by the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Gal 5:10).²⁹⁹

That is: the new way of seeing: that of faith; the new qualification: the act of civility transformed into a Christian virtue (of charity).

Causing one to see things in a new way, faith is its own standard. Under its light, realities take on a different value, they are appreciated (that is to say, they are given a price) according to different criteria, they are weighed

with different scales. Poverty, for example, is something detested. But Saint Lawrence considered the poor to be “the treasures of the Church.” Motivated by what? By his “great faith.”³⁰⁰

Faith equally touches the emotion and is expressed by attitudes of the heart. It is also a loving act of confidence and appeal to God, seen and known as the Father who wants what is good for his own and who never abandons them.

For De La Salle, the one who has faith shows it, attributing “all to God” who sustains them, receiving all “as from his hand” and abandoning themselves as children to the arms of the Father.³⁰¹ The son of Louis de La Salle expressed this beautifully when he said that the person who has faith in the providence of God is “like a sailor who puts out to sea without sails or oars.”³⁰²

And finally, faith has a dynamism. Because they are illuminated by a different vision of reality, motivated by other values, enriched by other reasons to have faith, people graced with faith hold attitudes not held and undertake actions not taken by the one who has not received this gift. In the language of De La Salle, “This is how faith ought to make you act.”³⁰³ The Lasallian who has the spirit of faith not only did “everything in view of God,”³⁰⁴ but, through carrying out his ministry, took all available measures so that God be glorified.

The teaching role itself and its exercise were the highest example of how faith, for De La Salle, unified life, at the same time that it gave it new meaning, value and dynamism. The Lasallian teacher wanted to be an excellent professional. He did not, however, see himself only as a professional; he conceived of himself, accepted himself and tried to live as a person called in vocation, called to exercise the teaching role as a mission, a ministry,³⁰⁵ a way of collaborating with the work of God.³⁰⁶ For the Lasallian teacher, the exercise of the profession assumed the dignity and responsibility of a religious duty.

More than one historian of education called De La Salle’s Brothers the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, which was not a pejorative designation. For example:

If the Brothers of Christian Doctrine³⁰⁷ were still with us, we would have excellent primary teaching.³⁰⁸

... It is necessary to await the end of the 17th century, to attend to a particular impulse given to popular education. And this was the work of the Brothers of Christian Doctrine, an institution created, in 1684, by John Baptist de La Salle.³⁰⁹

But we know that the name that De La Salle and his Brothers chose was that of the “Brothers of the Christian Schools.” What De La Salle founded was a congregation of teachers, not of catechists, and these teachers’ purpose was not religious instruction in isolation, but the direction of the schools, of the Christian Schools which certainly encompassed as a fundamental element the teaching of Christian doctrine, but which went beyond that.

This is very clear in the beginnings of De La Salle’s work. The Lasallian novitiate was, at once, the center of preparation for religious life and the normal school that formed teachers pedagogically. This house of formation was not a canonical institution, since the Society (of the “Christian Schools”) had no juridical status whatsoever. It did not end with an obligation to make vows. It was, above all, a period of religious formation, in the course of which, the difficulty of bringing together professional and spiritual life should be resolved. Its substance required preliminary teaching experience and a certain psychological maturity.³¹⁰

In the same “holy” *Common Rules* that contained the spiritual exercises and the norms of religious life of the Brother, chapters on the school were also included: “Chapter 7: How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School,” and “Chapter 10: The Days and Times When the Brothers Will Teach School and the Days on Which They Will Give a Holiday to Their Pupils.”³¹¹ The interior activities (of the community), along with the religious exercises, included professional studies and exercises for the class; and, in the other direction, the external activities (of the school) mixed arithmetic, reading and calculations with prayer, examination of conscience and Mass.

In the life of the Lasallian teacher, the professional and the Christian/religious did not simply co-exist, they overlapped and defined each other reciprocally.

On the one hand, for De La Salle, the teacher's faith was a new stimulus to prompt him to complete all of his professional tasks in a responsible and creative way. His communitarian "exercises," including those of a religious character, constituted the element contingent upon which the school carried out its vocation: "You must fulfill your duties not only in school but also in your other exercises, because school work without the exercises does not go well."³¹²

On the other hand, in consecrating himself to God, the teacher knew that this consecration happened, that it showed itself to be authentic in consecration to the service of those whom God entrusted to him, and that "his journey with the students constituted the true place of his religious experience"³¹³; that his *opus Dei* was his teaching, his work with students, with all that meant in terms of relationships with them and their parents, of cooperative activity with teacher colleagues, of study, of development of scholarly activities, from the planning to the evaluation and re-planning, etc.

The teacher's prayer participated in both of these movements. It was apostolic, ministerial; it preceded, accompanied and followed from his educational activity. As the *Rule for the Brothers of the Christian Schools* would say three centuries later, Lasallian prayer, on the one hand, is nourished by the "calls which come from one's ministry," and, on the other, "fortifies [the Brother] in the willingness to serve and purifies the quality of his apostolic action."³¹⁴

According to this logic, De La Salle asked his teacher to be intellectually prepared, professionally competent, showing quality in his secular teaching and, at the same time, showing himself to be a person manifestly of God and, in the midst of teaching, knowing how to witness to his faith naturally and opportunely. That he know to link religious practice, called piety, to the realm of knowing and be conscious of the advantage that arose from that confluence: "Piety by itself is ordinarily useful only for the people who possess it, but when learning is united with piety, it makes for a great person very useful to the Church."³¹⁵ In other words, to direct his religious teacher, the founder insisted that internal and external obligations be carried out jointly: "Your exercises and your classes: they are your total concern," he wrote, and "Apply yourself to interior prayer and to the classroom, because these are your two principal occupations, the ones for which you will render God a detailed account."³¹⁶ Finally, with "brilliant two-sidedness,"³¹⁷ De La Salle's teacher had the certainty and the consolation of knowing that, doing that which was for him the will of God, that is, carrying out zealously the teaching role as a way of procuring the salvation of his students, he could "be assured that if you act this way for their salvation, God will assume the responsibility for yours."³¹⁸

In other words, De La Salle assimilated and practiced this spiritual principle and conviction:

It is a good rule of life to make no distinction at all between the work of our vocation in life and the work of our salvation and perfection. We can be sure that we cannot work out our salvation better or achieve perfection more surely than by discharging our responsibilities, provided that we accomplish them in view of the will of God.³¹⁹

Assessment by Historians of Education

Since De La Salle did not use the expression "integral education," the writers of the history of education do not speak of it in referring to the educator and pedagogue of Rheims, but they make reference to various points related to it.

They recall particularly De La Salle's care in attending to the various levels of the person to be educated: the physical, as in his directions, in the *Conduct*, regarding furniture and school material, and the conditions of hygiene and healthfulness of the classroom; the psychological, particularly the intellectual dimension, with his insistence on good learning and learning comprehensively; and the spiritual, with priority given to catechesis and the care taken to administer it appropriately.

Few, very few, speak of De La Salle's intention to integrate the secular and the religious and the professional and the spiritual, particularly in the person of the educator. One who does is Cilleuls, for whom, for De La Salle,

“the novitiate stopped being, as in previous centuries, simply preparation for religious life; it became the origin of the Normal School.”³²⁰

But it was Willot who raised better and more fully this reciprocal implication and influx of the spiritual and the pedagogical in the person of the Lasallian educator. For him, the characteristic feature, the great mark of the spirituality of the Lasallian educator was “his unitive character,” the “unity of inspiration that pervades the life of the religious educator in its various circumstances.” From his text, it is particularly worthwhile to point out the passage in which he affirmed that “the great effort of the (Lasallian) Institute and its radical originality reside in this powerful internal unity, in this brilliant two-sidedness of acts, apparently distinct, which comprise the life of the Brother.” He called attention to the fact that De La Salle “animated spiritually a daily life in many ways prosaic, routine,” and he observed that De La Salle cultivated in his followers this “healthy realism that integrates and, without confusing them, unifies all the values of this spirituality, as in the pedagogy that it sustains.”³²¹

Christian Education

4

Education in the Context of Christendom

In the French 17th century, a cultural phenomenon that took place in the west in a particular period of history, in the case of France, from the Middle Ages until the revolutionary era – called Christendom in Church history – continued. Additionally, following strong religious movements in Italy (15th century) and Spain (16th century), in 17th-century France a notable pastoral and spiritual renewal was seen, provoked by the application – albeit late – of the Council of Trent, promoted by the official Church and by notable pastors and spiritual teachers, such as Saint Francis of Sales, and translated into efforts such as the restoration of the priestly state, the coexistence of mystical depth and missionary ardor, the importance given to catechesis, the renewal of liturgical splendor, the reform of older religious orders, the introduction of reformed orders, such as the Carmelites, the creation of new religious congregations, an increased charity and the development of numerous methods of mental prayer

In this context of Christendom and spiritual renewal, God was the universal center of gravity, an omnipresent reality whose knowledge was essential for all. He was the ultimate explanation, the one on whom everything depended, to whom, naturally and directly, everything was attributed, without consideration of secondary causes. That is what caused, for example, Jean-Baptiste Blain to give his vision of the origin as well as the purpose of the food shortage of 1692-1693 (the worst in *Ancien Régime* France): for him, the famine consisted of “terrible arrows that the hand of the angry God casts against the just and sinners, to revivify the piety of the first and to bring the latter back from having gone astray.”³²²

In that era, practically all the French were Christians. Thought was Christian. Dogmatic certainties ruled life and were defended with methods such as censure (of books) and tests of orthodoxy. This thought was expressed in language that reflected the Christian environment in which it was generated. It is enough to look at a dictionary from the time. Thus, in the *New Dictionary of the French Academy* many of the examples given to elucidate the meaning of the words were of a religious nature. The terms *abîme* and *abîmer* serve as illustration. To exemplify their meaning and use, the referenced dictionary gave examples such as “the rebel angels were cast into the abyss. The abyss of wisdom, of God’s mercy. God cast the five cities into the abyss. Marvel in contemplation of the mercies of God.”

People lived according to Christianity. The Easter “obligation,” for example, was nearly universally practiced. Any failure to keep it (always exceptional) was suspect and, practically speaking, costly. The sacred infused everything, such that religion penetrated even the most intimate aspects of public and private life. The rhythm of the year was marked by the liturgical seasons and by the numerous sanctoral feasts. More than the dates on the calendar, the name and day of the saints were references for marking events in people’s lives: So-and-so was born on Saint Ignatius’ day, or the other died on the feast of Saint Roch. The rent was paid on the feast of Saint John, or classes started on the feast of Saint Michael.

All of life was organized as a function of religion, which was the definitive reference. More than performing Christian acts, people lived in a Christian state. In their lives, the religious and the profane were interwoven with one another, with the first being preponderant.

Lasallian practice itself serves as evidence of this. In De La Salle's school, for example, outside the ordinary break on Thursdays, practically all the other break days corresponded to religious feasts, many of them saints' feast days: All Souls Day; the feast of Saint Nicholas and Ash Wednesday; Holy Week (which went from Thursday to the following Wednesday); the feasts of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Joseph; feast days celebrated in the Community; feasts of patron saints of parishes and guilds, etc.³²³ In De La Salle's book on civility many elements were taken together, as a single way of life, that today are practiced separately in a person's secular and religious lives.

Politics and religion were strictly overlapping, and the religion referred to here is Catholicism, which was the state religion. Other confessions, even Christian, had no right of citizenship.

On the one hand, the State entered into the ecclesiastical structures. For example, the Concordat of 1516 had granted to the king the right of patronage, which meant, in practice, the naming of all the major benefices³²⁴ (all the bishops and most of the abbots), corresponding to papal canonical investiture.

On the other hand, the Church was present in the workings of the State. The king had a particular confessor and consulted his "Counselor of Conscience" on religious matters. Civic holidays and national events were opportunities for religious rites, when they did not become a part of them. The clerics frequently were part of the government, as ministers (one need only remember Richelieu and Mazarin), counselors and preceptors, and carried out tasks that later would be designated public functions. During religious education given by the parish priest, for example, he read on Sundays a public warning requiring those who suspected something "to make known the truth of something not revealed."³²⁵ Particularly in the rural context, baptismal registration, processed by the clergy, "constituted legal proof of existence: anyone not baptized did not exist, even civilly."³²⁶

The bride and groom administer the sacrament of marriage to one another before "our Mother, the Holy Church," which was, after the end of the 16th century, exclusively allowed to register and provide written evidence of marriage, such that from then forward, prior testimonies, even those given before a notary, were no longer accepted.³²⁷

And what Church was it, present everywhere, even in the workings of the State?

To speak of Christendom, in France at the time of John Baptist de La Salle, is to refer to the collective spiritual identity of an institutional Church, but with a Church-Society that never knew if it were the eschatological Church or the present Church, that of Christ, of the pope, of the king, or of the "princes of the Church."³²⁸

Regarding the "princes of the Church," the bishop frequently took on both a religious and a public function, as was the case of "François-Placide de Baudry de Piencourt, bishop, lord and governor of the city of Mende ...," who, in 1707, "funded" schools and teachers "of the Lord Abbot De La Salle," who "are the most famous of the kingdom and those with whom the youth most progress in virtue."³²⁹

In all of this, the fact that the theological doctrine of the Church gave support to the current political regime, in this case "reigning," that is, to the absolute monarchy, is fundamental. According to such doctrine, the monarchy existed by divine right and the king mediated between God and men. The work written by Bossuet in 1709, entitled *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*, was in this vein. This doctrine also produced statements such as that of Henri, the poet of Lille: "The cause of Louis is the cause of God," or of Mme. de Maintenon: "I loved him with the admiration and mystery due to the gods."³³⁰

Such recognition and support were clearly met with "royal political compensation," in which, at least partially, measures were written such as that taken against the Protestants with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, of which Mme. de Sevigné wrote: "Nothing is prettier than this declaration. The king has never done, nor will ever do, anything more memorable!" and which made Bossuet to exclaim, in writing to the king: "Through you, the heresy no longer exists. God has done this miracle."³³¹

De La Salle, a Christian of his time, at times did not differentiate between these two institutions, as though including one in the other. Thus, in speaking of prayer, he said that "the persons in the Church for whom we should ordinarily offer our prayers are those who govern and exercise authority over her, whether spiritual, such as the pope, bishops, and pastors, or temporal, such as kings, princes of the earth, and

magistrates.”³³² Or when, explaining the fourth commandment of the Church, taught that the magistrates had the obligation, among other things, “to prevent and punish scandals, and to see that the laws of God, of the Church, and of the king are observed.”³³³

All of this was reflected in education and in everything concerning it. The work of education was nearly exclusively that of the Church. The Church determined the purpose – fundamentally religious – of education: to instruct Catholic children and to raise them to live as such and to initiate Protestants into Catholicism. The most varied voices in the institutional Church all asserted and defended this. Bourdoise held and defended the conviction that the school was “the novitiate of Christianity.”³³⁴ Canon Blain saw it as a place of learning Christian beliefs and practices. It is known, for example, that the Sunday School that De La Salle set up in the Paris parish of Saint Sulpice, in addition to catechism, helped the young people improve their reading, writing and arithmetic, and taught them design. But, in speaking of this, what did Blain include? “The door of this school was open to all those who came of good will. In this way, no young person could claim the need to earn a living during the week as an excuse for their ignorance of Christian doctrine and the duties of salvation.”³³⁵

The Church also set the content of education, which were essentially religious/catechetical: orthodox doctrine, the catechism; the practice of life according to Christian morality; and worship (through learning of the psalms, other prayers, daily attendance at Mass, frequenting the sacraments). If learning to read in French and, after it, Latin, was promoted, this happened to the extent to which it allowed students to follow along with the liturgical ceremonies and to learn the catechism.

The Church also took on the administration of education. Education was supervised by the parish priest, in the schools “of charity,” and by the “scholastic” in the Little Schools of the paid teachers. Both – the parish priest and the “scholastic” – were responsible for selection of teachers (for whom piety and good habits counted for more than intellectual and pedagogical capacity), for installation of the faculty (authorization to teach, normally renewed each year), for control of the exercise of the teaching function, and for some small overlay of formation of the teachers.

The environment of the schools, including the images there, breathed religion. The rhythm of school life was set by religious activity. The materials used had much to do with religion; the text books, for example, were basically “on piety.”

Christian Schools

De La Salle developed his educational activity within this context and, in large part, according to its standards. In his time, all the schools were Christian, whether Catholic or Protestant, but they were not called Christian. They had various names, such as has been seen, Charity Schools and Little Schools. De La Salle and his followers, with no fear of being redundant, called theirs the Christian School, and the Institute that was responsible for it was designated the “Institute of the Brothers of the *Christian Schools*.”

For De La Salle and his co-founders, there was no doubt about the Christian character of their instrument of educational activity, whether the elementary school, the Sunday school, the Normal School, or the various boarding schools. The adjective Christian, chosen by them, was not simply an addition placed next to the noun school. For them, *Christian* was constitutive of their school. It identified its entire being and doing.

It is not unreasonable that, with all that the *Conduct* contained regarding concrete details, administration, teaching, schedules, everything prosaic and secular, Zuluaga saw it as “the application to the scholarly practice of a theology of education.”³³⁶ In effect, as much as Lasallian pedagogical theory and educational practice might have been of an integral, vital, realistic, effective and efficient character, such theory and practice situated themselves on the ground of faith; they were carried out according to God’s perspective; they were inspired by the Gospel; they had Jesus Christ as their central reference; and they constituted a pastoral project. Pope John Paul II referred to it in a message directed to Lasallians on May 13, 1980: “Thanks to this conception of the Christian School, the student was encouraged and aided in discovering a unified center in the midst of diverse scholastic disciplines. That center was Christ.”³³⁷

This Christian identity was one of the reasons the Lasallian school was desired and welcomed by bishops, priests, civil leaders and Christian parents, and even by the “most Christian king.” In fact, in the *Letters Patent* of 1724, it was explicitly written that it was the will of the sovereign that the Brothers continue at Saint Yon, “directing the school of charity in which they teach the principles of the Christian faith.”³³⁸

Concretely, the Lasallian school was from the beginning, Christian in its **origin**, in its **end**, and in its **formative action**.

Christian Origin

First, there is God’s design: God is good – infinitely good – and, in his infinite goodness, wants that all men and women come to know the truth and achieve salvation.³³⁹

Second, there is a fact. Actually, two: the first, to wit, that this design of salvation was not being carried out amongst the children of the artisans and the poor, those who did not know how to reach the truth and eternal salvation, nor how to save themselves from the situation of material insecurity and a lack of prospects for the future. The second was that God’s Providence acted: it put into motion the accomplishment of that design “for the ministry of men,” of people with “knowledge and zeal,” “destined to announce his word to children, so that they may be able to enlighten those children by unveiling for them the glory of God.”³⁴⁰

Among these “educated and zealous” people called to “that ministry” were the Christian teachers, including the religious teachers brought together in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. That Institute was more God’s initiative than human undertaking. The teachers associated in the Christian Schools for the Christian and human education of the children of artisans and of the poor were the creation of Providence to bring about the plan of salvation of men.³⁴¹ Thus, the Lasallian school had a Christian origin, according to De La Salle’s understanding as presented in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.

Christian End

The ultimate end of the Lasallian school, that which those who worked in it aimed for, was to procure the glory of God: “God has called you to your ministry in order to procure his glory” was one of the basic convictions that De La Salle instilled in his teachers. It was reiterated to them in this way: thus, “everything we do must be for [God’s] glory.” His followers and co-founders, faithful to his direction and encouraged by his example said with him to God:

Most Holy Trinity, ... I consecrate myself entirely to you to procure your glory as far as I will be able and as you will require of me, and for this purpose, I, renew the vows that I have made before to unite myself and to remain in Society with the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who are associated to conduct together and by association the Gratuitous Schools.³⁴²

The intermediate end for which this glory was brought about was to contribute to the salvation of the children of artisans and of the poor.³⁴³ What Blain wrote about the school for the sons of sailors, taken on by De La Salle’s Brothers in Calais, could be said of every one of their schools: “This school always produced great fruit. Full of the sons of sailors, it is, for them, an academy of the science of salvation.”³⁴⁴

Within the dichotomous view taken of the human person in De La Salle’s time, some explanation is required to understand this end. As has already been seen, examining De La Salle’s concrete work with the children of the popular classes, it was demonstrated that such work contributed to their material and temporal salvation, that is to say, to their corporal, intellectual and social redemption. Reviewing some of his texts, his preoccupation that these children be prepared to be “capable of all,” that is to say, in a position to undertake successfully an occupation, is clear.

It is also true that, in using the word salvation, the founder of the Christian Schools referred primarily to eternal salvation, or the “salvation of the soul,” as they said at that time and as many later continued to say.

What was the specific end, what we might call instrumental, for bringing about the other ends? “To give a Christian education to children.”³⁴⁵ In the oldest preserved letter of De La Salle, written on June 20, 1682, to the prefect and the magistrates of Château-Porcien, he spoke of “Christian instruction,” the same expression that he later used at greater length in the *Common Rules*. He saw the Christian School as filling the gap of what the parents could not give their children, “the instruction they need and a respectable and Christian education.”³⁴⁶

According to De La Salle, what did it mean “to give a Christian education”? It was very simple: make the student a Christian, a disciple of Christ.³⁴⁷ In this regard, De La Salle did not take a middle road. He wanted that, just as with other Christians, that is to say, disciples of Christ, the student formed in the Lasallian school would not just be Christian, but be a good Christian, a true Christian. That he be not only a disciple of Christ, but also a disciple of truth.³⁴⁸ In other words, De La Salle had a very high ideal. He did not want that, with the collaboration of the Brother, the children merely be saved; he aspired to their being raised to holiness: in the language of Saint Paul, “that all reach the age of adulthood perfect and in the fullness of Christ.”³⁴⁹

This ideal went so far as to propose that the student not only know, adore and love Jesus Christ, but that he have him as the object of his thoughts and words, that he aspire only to him and desire only him.³⁵⁰ Thus, bearing in mind above all the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, one can assert with complete certainty that De La Salle shared fully Bourdoise’s conviction that “the school is the novitiate of Christianity. If Saint Paul and Saint Denis came to France today, they would become school teachers.”³⁵¹

Considering the specific end, what did De La Salle mean by “making a student a Christian”? It meant giving him **religious instruction**, having him develop and live a **Christian spirit and motivations**, preparing him to have the ethical-moral **conduct** according to Christian principles and introducing him to Christian **piety**. It meant, more than teaching a student, initiating a disciple into the mysteries, the practices and the rites of the Christian world.

Religious Instruction

Religious instruction was a primary aspect of Christian formation in the Lasallian school. De La Salle’s student needed to be enlightened doctrinally. It was necessary to explain the truths of the Christian religion, “those things that a Christian is obliged to know,”³⁵² and have him study them. Explaining and having him study the truths of the Christian religion, that is to say in the case of De La Salle, the Catholic religion, was a necessity in principle and in reality. In principle, because – to repeat – according to the belief of the era, among these truths, “a number of doctrines are absolutely necessary for us to know in order to be saved”³⁵³; in reality, because these young Catholics needed to be prepared to confront the risks that threatened them, even within the Church itself, such as Jansenism, Gallicanism and Quietism,³⁵⁴ and outside of it, such as, principally, Protestantism (in France, the adherents of Calvinism, known in France as Huguenots, and frequently referred to as those of the R.P.R. (*religion prétendue réformée*), or simply, the “religionists.”

About what truths was it necessary to enlighten these young intellects? On the speculative as much as on the practical level, as every Christian should know:

Q. How many truths does the Church teach and command us to believe?

A. There are two kinds of such truths: speculative and practical.

Q. What are the speculative truths that the Church teaches and commands us to believe?

A. They are truths that we must simply believe, such as that there is only one God.

Q. What do we mean by the practical truths that the Church commands us to believe?

A. They are truths that we must both believe and practice, such as forgiving our enemies and doing good to them.³⁵⁵

In other words, in the theoretical arena, the student had to know sacred history, that is, the mysteries of religion, all of which, in a general way, were designated dogma. In the practical realm, it was important that they master the subject matter referred to as moral: what, given that he was a Christian, he should do and what he should avoid, within the logic of his religious option.

This domain, which De La Salle called the “practical truths,”³⁵⁶ he described another way, in saying that the student should assimilate and accept the “maxims” and, at times, redundantly, the “practical maxims” of the Gospel. Redundantly, because, for the founder of the Christian Schools, a maxim was ordinarily a precept, a concrete obligation set forth by the Gospel, a word of Scripture to be lived: Love God above all things. Love your neighbor as yourself. Pray without ceasing.

To bring the children whom you instruct to take on the Christian spirit, you must teach them the practical truths of faith in Jesus Christ and the maxims of the holy Gospel with at least as much care as you teach the truths that are purely theoretical.³⁵⁷

Christian Spirit

The students “will not be Christians in name only. They will also have the spirit and the conduct of Christians” if their teachers were “filled with faith and the Spirit of God,” wrote De La Salle in his Meditation on Saint Barnabas.³⁵⁸

This “Christian spirit,” we know De La Salle also called “the spirit of Christianity,” when he spoke of faithful Christians in general, and referred to as “the spirit of faith,” when he referred to his religious Brothers. The important thing is that, in both cases, for him, such a spirit is essential.

Thus, “those who have dedicated themselves to instruct them must devote themselves especially to bring them up in the Christian spirit.” Transmitting it should be their “primary concern,” helping them not only possess it, but possess it fully.³⁵⁹

What is this Spirit?

It was faith itself in the first of its three dimensions: faith as a particular way of seeing and evaluating reality. It was to see in this way, to look at others and the world with a different significance and quality, to give them a new weight and accord them a distinct value.

And what was the light that allowed the Christian this special vision, the key that made possible this particular reading of the world, the unique prism through which he could see it from another angle and with a new heart? What was the scale, the measure that allowed him to give new weight, a different value to things?

It was God’s own way of seeing, of appraising, present in Scripture and revealed incarnationally in Jesus Christ. As Jesus Christ made known particularly in the Gospel, for the Christian this must be the primary reference for understanding and appraising people, things and events. The Christian must develop in him or herself a Gospel mentality and way of valuing.

De La Salle affirmed all of this with examples taken from the Gospel itself. By this new light, the Magi “adore him as their God,” “a poor child being nursed by his mother”; to Saint Peter, “Jesus Christ was then just a common man in the eyes of the world, without any acclaim,” but left everything to follow him; and Thomas saw “in one instant by a vision and a deepening of his faith what previously had been hidden,” that is, he recognized Jesus when he entered the room in which the apostles were gathered after the Resurrection.³⁶⁰ Weighed with this scale, Saint Stephen considered in a new way suffering and death itself. He considered himself to be honored because, with them, he could join himself to his Teacher, Jesus, who also suffered and died.

Translating this into the life of Christians in general, it has already been seen that De La Salle asked, for example, that they see good manners in human relationships in this light.

To the teachers, he suggested they seek inspiration for thinking, feeling and consequently acting, in this place where the thinking, feeling and acting of God and those who imitate him are revealed, namely Holy Scripture: that love of the student, which would bring the teacher to sacrifice himself and spend his entire life on his behalf, take as its model the love of the Father, who did not spare his own Son for the redemption of the world; that the practice of vigilance over the students and the need to know them individually be read and lived in light of the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd of his sheep; that the same Jesus, as evangelizer, suggest the content to develop, the methodology to use and the intentionality to have; that the correction of the student be seen and undertaken according to the scriptural key of the relationship between David and Nathan, the former being brought to conversion by the latter.³⁶¹

Turning to the founder's reading on the origins of his Institute, in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, it is interesting to compare it, even though there is some repetition, with what he did in the *Common Rules*.³⁶²

In the *Common Rules*, he described the sociological fact of poor parents who were not themselves in a position to instruct and educate their children and the calamitous consequences that resulted, the habitual vices acquired, which were very difficult to overcome later. He then added: "It was to procure this advantage for the children of the working class and of the poor that the Christian Schools **were established**."³⁶³ He concluded, writing that, given that the Institute's end was precisely to remediate that lamentable situation, at the same time, from the material, social, cultural and religious angle, "the necessity of this Institute is very great."

In the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, De La Salle repeated precisely the same sociological framework: the poor parents could not instruct or attend to their children, which resulted in disastrous consequences: the children, rather than learning to work, became habituated to vagrancy. But here, in the text written to be used as a source of meditation in which the teacher began contemplating, in faith, the universal salvific plan of God, the conclusion was entirely different: to remedy this situation of material, social, cultural and spiritual abandonment, it was not men who instituted the Christian Schools. God was the one who established them, "in order to heal so great an evil." Men were merely the instruments that the providential will of the Lord used "to give the children such great benefits." This is the definitive Lasallian writing on the origins of the Lasallian Institute: a writing on faith, a Christian writing.

In another text, *Rules Which I Impose upon Myself*, he repeated this same idea that God is the origin of the Lasallian Institute. He added that it was also God who directed it as his work:

I will always regard the work of my salvation and the founding and governing of our Community as the work of God. This is why I will abandon the care of both to him to bend myself only to his purposes. I will often seek his guidance to know what I must do for the one or the other. I will often repeat these words of the Prophet Habakkuk: *Domine opus tuum*.³⁶⁴

In his Christian way of seeing, the **student** appeared, to De La Salle, to be the child of God, consecrated to him and filled with his Spirit.³⁶⁵ He was the field cultivated by God, through the teacher, to whom God brought him, to whose care he entrusted him, and under whose tutelage he placed him, such that he might care for him as his protector, his support and father.³⁶⁶ If he were poor, as were the great majority of Lasallian students, for the teacher he was the sacrament of Jesus Christ himself, hidden under the "poor swaddling clothes"³⁶⁷ that clothed him.

Through the theological lens through which De La Salle saw everything, the **school** was, in the first place, a form of continuation of the evangelizing work begun by Jesus Christ, entrusted to his apostles and carried out by the pastors of the Church throughout the centuries.³⁶⁸ It was the place where the Gospel was announced, lived and celebrated. It was the pastoral instrument of the Church and the privileged place where the Church was built and perfected. In the school, through the actions of conscientious and engaged Christian teachers, the foundations of the Church were laid by initiating children into all that they would do as the living stones that would constitute the Church and contribute to the Church's being purified, beautified and sanctified.³⁶⁹

In this way,

Whenever a city offered to finance De La Salle's teachers, he asked first for the approval of the local bishop and pastor because, if the teachers' authority came from the parents (who entrusted their children to them), it also came, in the Christian Schools, from the Church, represented by the legitimate pastor and the local bishop.³⁷⁰

The image that De La Salle had of the **teacher** and what should develop in him was built almost entirely on a religious base. The teacher was someone chosen, called, destined and sent by God, his instrument of salvation, a sacrament of his love for the young, a worker in his vineyard.³⁷¹ He was sent as mediator between God and the students, guardian angel of his followers,³⁷² spiritual father to each of them,³⁷³ a substitute for the fathers and mothers in the work of teaching them to know God and his mysteries.³⁷⁴

In relation to Jesus Christ, among other things, he was minister, ambassador, and representative sent by Christ to announce his Gospel.³⁷⁵

For the Church, he was its minister and participated in the ministry of the pastors, particularly that of the bishop³⁷⁶:

In the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*, the founder calls to mind that baptism and confirmation make each Christian a participant in the “ministries” for which the bishop has responsibility. The teacher does not need an additional sacrament to carry out his educational “ministry.”

De La Salle went even further. Since, in the Church, it is the bishops, and not the simple priests, who are responsible for the “teaching ministry,” Christian teachers participate more in the “ministry of the bishops” than in the ministry of the priests or of any other degree of the sacrament of orders.³⁷⁷

In summary, the Lord, from whom all gifts proceed, made being a Christian teacher an “honor.” He enriched him with an extraordinary gift: that of instructing, exhorting and encouraging to good the children of God.³⁷⁸ God entrusted to him the most precious part of his treasures, that is, the poor children, and established him as the administrator of the deposit of faith to transmit it to them.³⁷⁹

But God, having given him such riches, and making him responsible for them, asked him to give an account of what he had done and, if he carried out his charge with zeal, God rewarded him in this world and would reward him for all eternity. The rewards that awaited him, even the earthly rewards, were primarily of a religious character. They were announced in tones unusual in De La Salle’s writings. In speaking of them, the founder left his ordinary style, which was normally calm, and his voice carried emotion and became excited.³⁸⁰ Above all in the final two points of the last of his *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* this tone reverberated, as though with the culminating intention of communicating De La Salle’s highest point regarding the ministry of the Christian teacher, an idea – to repeat – fundamentally built on a religious base, with the eyes of faith of someone inspired by the Christian spirit.

Christian Motivations

For De La Salle, having the Christian spirit was not simply seeing everything through different eyes and assessing everything by different standards. It also meant doing things for different motives. For him, education did not consist merely of shaping external behavior. He wanted also to reach the deepest motivations of actions.

This applied to every Christian. In the preface of the *Rules of Decorum*, as previously referenced, he said that all actions and, specifically, all norms of courtesy, whether of nobles, bourgeois or plebians, should be done “for purely Christian motives.” That is to say, regarding good manners, the perspective of the Christian faith – an intentional reference to God – should be adopted. Given De La Salle’s belief in this regard, not a few pages of his book on good manners would fit right into a catechism: According to Saint Paul,

all our actions ought to be holy, there are none that ought not to be done through purely Christian motives. Thus, all our external actions, which are the only ones that can be guided by the rules of decorum, must always, through faith, possess and display the characteristics of virtue.³⁸¹

Why, for example, the respect for the body, the disposition which the entire first part of the *Rules of Decorum* addressed? Respect for one’s own body and for those of others was not based on purely human interests, such as social ethics or fear of recriminations by others, but on the fact that the body of another as well as one’s own were animated by the Holy Spirit and were members of Jesus Christ: God is in them.

Capelle synthesized these ideas well in a different way: for De La Salle, “to educate for social behavior, to adopt the *savoir-faire* of the educated person, is not to sacrifice oneself to a certain style and to want to live above one’s station; it is, first of all, to express the love due to God, to neighbor, and to one’s self.”³⁸² If this directive was valid for all Christians, it was particularly so for the Lasallian teacher and student, to whom the founder wrote in the first place.

According to the logic of the ultimate end of Lasallian education, the motivation that should inspire and guide the work of the religious educator was the glory of God and his love, not personal glory, material wealth or emotional rewards sought for their own sake. In the Christian Schools, “teaching is offered entirely ... for the glory of God.”³⁸³ “It is indeed a great glory for you to instruct your disciples about the truths of the Gospel solely for the love of God.”³⁸⁴

Poutet recalled that at Saint Yon there were boarding school students, difficult youths and delinquents. He commented, “All these people belong to very different, even opposed, social categories. For all, De La Salle required that his Brothers show great esteem.” With what motivation? Because “all are the same before God and because they themselves, poor Brothers, should consider themselves superior to no one, in order to participate in the humility of the Son of God made human.”³⁸⁵

The Lasallian educator worked with the poor. He was to love them. Why? For a practical reason, greater probability of a positive result in his own work: the poor were the most disposed to receive the message of God. That motivation already had a religious character, but there was also another motivation, this one from faith: they are the image of Jesus Christ and are members of him.³⁸⁶ There is the question – the difficult question – of physical punishment. But even in this the teacher was not to fail to value this directive. Even punishments should be given not from “worldly” motives, but in “a spirit of faith.”³⁸⁷

The teacher asked students for silence. With what motivation? They were to be made to understand that they should keep silence “because God sees them and it is God’s holy will and not just because the teacher is present.”³⁸⁸ The same presence of the Lord was to be the student’s motive to enter respectfully into the classroom: “They will be inspired to enter the classroom with profound respect, out of consideration for the presence of God.”³⁸⁹

From time to time, the teacher was to encourage the students to do acts of charity (for example, to share their bread with the poorer students). How? “Either by some example or by some appealing reason, which will rouse them to this action out of goodness of heart and with affection for the love of God.”³⁹⁰

The love of God – the same motivation to be also used at other times. For example: if a student was not in class due to illness, the “Visitor of Absent Students,” going to see him, was to encourage him to suffer “his illness for the love of God.”³⁹¹

Christian Ethical-Moral Conduct

In various places and in different ways, De La Salle insisted that teaching the Christian truths and the adoption of the Christian spirit were not enough, but rather that it was also necessary to live a Christian life:

To be saved, it does not suffice to be instructed in the Christian truths that are purely theoretical ... It is, then, not enough to procure the Christian spirit for children ... You must also teach them the practical maxims that are found throughout the holy Gospel ... 1) you must help them understand the maxims as set forth in the holy Gospel, and 2) you must guide their steps along the way that leads them to put these maxims into practice.³⁹²

In other words, Lasallian Christian formation was to touch the ethical-moral being of the Lasallian student, his acts and ways of carrying them out.

This dimension was an object of attention beginning with the interview for enrollment,³⁹³ in which, parallel to other aspects, special interest in the moral side was evident, through to the ending of every school year, when the teacher filled out a list of the “good and bad qualities” of his students.³⁹⁴

In this ethical-moral formation, the care of directing students regarding possible defects (in the language of the time and of De La Salle), easily called sins or vices, held an important place. The *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* indicated some defects which were to be combatted. In the Register of qualities, there were various “bad qualities” to note. Other defects were called to mind in the self-examination that the student made at the end of the day. In the *Questions and Answers on Learning How to Confess Well*, others are listed.³⁹⁵

What were these defects? They were faults such as: not attending Mass, or negligent attention during it; disrespect in the Church or during prayers; impurity and gluttony; lying and judgment; theft and robbery;

disobedience and disregard for superiors, particularly their parents; fights and rudeness in dealing with classmates; sloth; truancy, etc.

The vice with which there was a true obsession, in the context of the time, was that of impurity. As, for example, the *Common Rules* stated that “the spirit of this Institute consists ... in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their innocence if they have not lost it.”³⁹⁶ The innocence to which it refers was practically synonymous with purity.

Beginning with the interview for enrollment, the Director inquired about concrete points linked to this preoccupation and made clear demands regarding it. Throughout, the *Conduct* revolved around themes such as care regarding the people with whom the students slept, the restriction concerning bathing [at swimming holes] during school breaks, attention to the place of the room where physical punishment was administered and recommendations about the posture that should be maintained during it.³⁹⁷ In various places, suspicion of the students’ contact with members of the female sex are expressed. In school,

they will not allow either girls or women to enter for any reason whatever, unless it is to visit poor children and they are accompanied by the parish priest or some other priest responsible for the care of the poor in the city.³⁹⁸

The Inspector of Schools was to be vigilant that “students avoid, with great care, above all, the company of young girls.”³⁹⁹ Even at the time of enrollment, the Director notified the parents that the boys, if they want to be admitted, “they [could] not associate regularly with girls ... even if merely to play with them.”⁴⁰⁰

To recognize how these measures were in line with a general preoccupation amongst educators of the time, it suffices to remember that, according to the *Recommendations for Teaching the Catechism with Benefit*, by Father Barré, the female students were advised “never to leave the neck or arms uncovered, as do the demi-montaines and the prostitutes,” and equally, to avoid “walks and games with young men, even if they are their brothers or relatives.” Likewise, their teachers were not to allow “that they sleep with their sisters, or with their fathers and mothers.”⁴⁰¹

Related to these various defects, or sins, or vices, the duty of the Christian educator to those he educates was multifold, according to De La Salle. In the first place, he was to inspire a “great horror” of all of them.⁴⁰² Later, it was necessary not only to separate them from their vices, but to bring them to avoid all occasions that could put them in contact with them,⁴⁰³ such as bad companions or bad books. If the teacher, for example, caught a student with one of these publications, he was to take it and hand it in to the Director, who would burn it. “Which is very important.”⁴⁰⁴

The *Conduct* did not say it explicitly, but it seems evident that this preoccupation with avoiding contact with evil and with the occasions that tempt one to practice it was behind the proscription against spending holidays at the pre-Lenten carnival:

Holidays may not be given on the Monday and Tuesday immediately preceding the first day of Lent. Furthermore, students will even be required to be more exact in their attendance at school on these days than on any other day in the year.⁴⁰⁵

The teacher was also to be aware that the faults repeatedly committed by the children often begin to gain the force – or weakness? – of habits.

Independent of which fault, whether the sin had become habitual or not, the educator had a final and definitive duty with regard to his students: to help those students who fell into them “to renounce their past life”; encourage them to leave that life which, in the language of the time, De La Salle called “libertinism.”⁴⁰⁶ “Taking to heart” the “libertine” children and transforming them was one of the miracles that God not only gave the Christian educator “the power to do,” but which he asked him to bring about.⁴⁰⁷

But this ethical-moral formation was not reduced to the ascetic effort of avoiding defects, sins and vices. The Christian of the Lasallian school should, in it, also be initiated into Gospel living: to be brought to docility, fidelity and the observations of the Gospel maxims;⁴⁰⁸ to be helped to begin in the practice of the Christian virtues:

retirement from the world, modesty and piety, meekness and patience, simplicity and humility, kindness, respect for his parents;⁴⁰⁹ to be encouraged and taught to be fruitful in those good works that he was capable of according to his age;⁴¹⁰ and to be invited, especially, to live the Gospel beatitudes.⁴¹¹

Christian Piety

Christian formation also included the practice of what De La Salle, in the language of his time, called piety.⁴¹² In the 17th century, the word piety covered a wide range of meanings. Among other things, in the Lasallian school it was expressed through **respect for the sacred**; carrying out **relationship with God**, in private and liturgical **prayer**; in this, especially through the reception of the **sacraments**; and, most particularly, by the celebration of the **Eucharist**.

Respect for the sacred was one aspect of what, in De La Salle's era, was called "the spirit of religion."⁴¹³ It appears that this respect was required primarily with regard to Churches, the epitome of sacred space. In their liturgical catechism, to the question "What should we do to celebrate the feast of the dedication of a Church properly?" De La Salle responded that, among other things, "resolve with the grace of God never to enter Church without feelings of religious fervor and never to commit any sin there in the future."⁴¹⁴

But such respect is also prescribed for other places, and in a surprising form:

They will be inspired to enter the classroom with profound respect, out of consideration for the presence of God. When they have reached the center of the room, they will make a low bow before the crucifix ... After this, they will arise, again bow before the crucifix in the same manner ... and go quietly and silently to their regular places.⁴¹⁵

We already know what place they were entering – the classroom – with respect for the invisible presence of God and for the visible presence of Jesus Christ on the crucifix.

Another example: in the same scene, and with the same participants, now with the presence of the teacher, to begin prayer, "at the first sound of the bell [at 8:00 and 1:30], all the students will kneel in a very modest posture and manner, with their arms crossed and their eyes lowered."⁴¹⁶ The prayers should all be "prayed slowly and attentively."⁴¹⁷ Another sign of the importance of the sacred and of consideration for it was asked of the teacher: in addition to not punishing students during catechism, they were also not to do so during prayers.⁴¹⁸

Parallel to the idea of respect for sacred things was the sense of a holy fear of God, in which the zeal of the teacher was to educate the student and which, according to De La Salle's catechism, could be filial or servile. In the case, for example, of the pain felt for sins committed, such fear would be filial or servile according to whether the contrition for the wrong committed was perfect or imperfect.⁴¹⁹

Lasallian pedagogy attributed a fundamental role to the action of God in the overall development of the student. In the development of the activities of the Lasallian school, there was a great place reserved for God. Approximately half of the time in the school was dedicated to classes, the other half, to exercises of piety. There was an entire book written to list them, with all the rules on the way of doing them, *Exercises of Piety for the Christian School*.⁴²⁰

In a Christian School, the entire daily routine was marked by such exercises of piety and by religious practices, which formed its unifying and vivifying link: "The seventh chapter (of the first part of the *Conduct*), which enumerated the prayers and the moments in which one should pray in the school constituted the invisible and life-giving thread of each and all of the activities carried out by Lasallian students."⁴²¹

Within these exercises and practices, the most frequent and repeated was relationship with God in prayer,⁴²² strongly and insistently recommended by De La Salle. Upon entering the school, each student signed himself with holy water. At the beginning of classes, both in the morning and the afternoon, they made the sign of the cross, invoked the Holy Spirit and remembered the presence of God. In addition to opening prayer, longer prayer took place at the end of the morning and of the afternoon. The students were to perform the morning and afternoon prayer even during their holidays. They also prayed at the beginning of each lesson and made a quick invocation at the end of them.⁴²³ The same took place at the beginning and end of the "scholastic exercise" of taking their meal in the classroom, with the intention of Christian formation:

Students must be made to understand that it is desirable that they eat in school in order to teach them to eat with propriety, with decorum, and in a polite manner, and to invoke God before and after eating.⁴²⁴

The sign of the cross made upon entering the room and at the beginning of classes was repeated at various times throughout the day. Emiliano came to see De La Salle's school as "a type of liturgy marked by the cross."⁴²⁵

In his substantive treatise on prayer, De La Salle recalled that Saint John Chrysostom ordered the faithful "to not let a single hour slip away during the day without offering to God some prayer, such that the flow of our prayers accompany the passing of the day."⁴²⁶ When, in the same catechism, De La Salle spoke of the way to love God, he taught that

if we wish to love God truly, one of our first concerns should be to strive to perform all our actions for his love. Because habits are acquired and fortified only through acts, we should also make acts of love for God frequently during the day.⁴²⁷

This teaching and direction to Lasallian students was carried out through the exercise of recalling the presence of God, one of the privileged Lasallian acts of piety. On each hour and some half hours, work ceased. A student invited all to remember that they live and work under the divine gaze. Each day, the student called to mind a different religious mystery. The students interspersed these intercessions with various petitions and ended praying: "I will continue, O my God, to do all my actions for the love of you. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."⁴²⁸ This was the formula with which all prayers in the Lasallian school closed. Furthermore, a type of "perpetual rosary" was prayed, because the students, two by two in rotation, recited this prayer dedicated to the most holy Virgin. They were also encouraged to pray this prayer during school holidays.⁴²⁹

Psalms were also recited at school, for example, the *De Profundis* (Psalm 130) for the dead. On specified occasions, litanies were prayed, such as at Vespers on the feast of the Circumcision of the Lord, when the litanies of the most holy name of Jesus were recited and on the vigil of Saint Joseph's feast day, when the litanies of Saint Joseph were prayed.⁴³⁰

The activities of the academic routine, even those which one might least expect, were turned into objects of prayer for both the teacher and the student. For example, in giving and receiving punishment: the teacher, in considering giving it, reflected "before God, what correction this fault merits." The student being punished asked God for pardon for his fault, expressing his willing acceptance of the penance imposed, and even thanks for the correction he received, and promising God to no longer fall into the error committed.⁴³¹

The public form of prayer is the **liturgy** celebrated in and by the Christian community. The Christian School also initiated students into this kind of prayer. Students were urged to receive the **sacraments** frequently, according to their age and the practices of the time. According to the *Conduct*, children who had received their first communion were invited to receive the Eucharist "at least once a month." This religious practice was likewise recommended during school holidays: that, during this time, they go to confession and receive communion at least once, in addition to spending at least fifteen minutes daily in adoration of the Eucharist.⁴³²

Within the realm of liturgy, the **Eucharist** was central. Students at Lasallian schools attended Mass daily and were to do everything possible for those who were authorized to arrive early, in the morning, before the others, to be present on time to assist at this holy sacrifice.⁴³³

Still within the liturgy, great importance was given to feast days and to Sunday, truly lived as the day of the Lord. On these days, students, in addition to attending Mass in the morning, had catechism, prayer and Vespers in the afternoon. This practice was taken so seriously that missing catechism or Mass, through the parents' fault, on Sundays or feast days was designated a cause for dismissing the student from the school.⁴³⁴

Christian Formation

How was the desire to form the Christian expressed in the Lasallian school and what means were used to do so? One expression and fundamental means was the **catechism**. Parallel and complementary to it were daily practices

such as the **reflection** and the **examination of conscience**. They also used appropriate **readings**. The **entire school** was seen from this perspective. Fundamentally, it depended on the **teacher's** way of being and action.

The **catechism** was the constitutive practice of the Christian School. Consistently attending the catechism class was a condition for being a Lasallian student. In the interview for enrollment, this requirement was clearly communicated to the parents: “no one shall be accepted who does not attend catechism.”⁴³⁵ Some students were excused from attending school on some days of the week due to work, but they could never be excused after midday. Why? Because it was in the afternoon that the catechism class was taught. For the same reason, a student could be accepted who would only attend school in the afternoon, but never one who only came in the morning.⁴³⁶

As the *Common Rules* prescribed, and as De La Salle reminded his disciple countless times in other texts, they “will teach catechism daily,”⁴³⁷ even on Sundays and feast days. For De La Salle, this practice was based on scripture, specifically the Gospels and Acts, in which it says that Jesus Christ and the apostles taught doctrine daily in the temple and in various places.⁴³⁸

On ordinary days, catechism class lasted half an hour. On the eve of full-day holidays, they were an hour: half an hour on the principal mysteries and the same amount of time on the theme of the week. On Sundays and feast days, they lasted an hour and a half, with half an hour spent on reviewing the principal mysteries and one hour on a particular theme.⁴³⁹

To make the catechism agreeable and useful, practical measures of a didactic nature were taken, such as not preaching, but rather using questions and sub-questions, according to the level of the students, for the students to respond to, or telling stories which stimulated interest and held their attention.⁴⁴⁰

Two of the Lasallian practices seemed particularly directed at the ethical-moral development of the student: the **reflection** and the **examination of conscience**.

De La Salle asked the teacher to “work according to the grace that has been given to you to instruct by teaching and to exhort by encouraging”⁴⁴¹ their students. This exhortation was made particularly at the moment called the reflection that took place in the prayer made at the end of morning classes. There were five objects of the reflection: the current day as an opportunity for salvation; the uncertainty of the length of this life; the disposition to serve God well; the determination to not offend him; and care to avoid this offense by fleeing from sin.

Each day, the student charged with presiding at prayer first read the five points, pausing briefly between them. Then, he repeated the one that would receive particular attention that day. “Then a pause of the duration of a *Miserere* will be made. During this time, the teacher will make a little exhortation suited to the capacity of the students and on the subject of this meditation.”⁴⁴²

The Lasallian reflection was different from catechism. Catechism taught about theoretical truths and religious practices and worked extensively with questions and responses; the reflection essentially exhorted students to stimulate them to flee from evil and practice good and did so in a freer language. It was, thus, very much part of making a Christian, being, moreover, an excellent moment for the formation of the Christian mentality, that mentality that De La Salle identified as the “Christian spirit.”

De La Salle explained this exhortative and guiding approach more fully in a veritable synthesis of what a teacher should do in the ethical-moral formation of a student, found in one of his best meditations of a pedagogical nature, the meditation on the Good Shepherd:

In your exhortations to your students, explain their faults simply, and show them how to correct them. Make known to them the virtues they ought to practice, and help them see how easy this is. You must inspire them to have a very great horror for sin and to avoid bad companions. In a word, speak to them of everything that can lead them to piety.⁴⁴³

The examination of conscience always occurred during the prayer at the end of afternoon classes.⁴⁴⁴ It was conducted according to four blocks of themes, called the “articles” in the *Conduct* and in the book on the *Exercises of Piety Done during the Day in the Christian Schools*. Each block was made up of five points, each of which was an object of examination on one of the five class days of the week.

The same system used for the morning reflection was used for the examination of conscience: reading of the block of themes for the week; re-reading of that day's point; and meditation on it by the teacher.

In the examination of conscience, one reviewed the carrying out (or not) of the duties to God. Think on him. Adore him. Offer yourself to him. Behave well in Church. Keep [the] Sunday [observance]. Attend Mass. Pray before and after meals. Keep the commandments. Listen to, retain and practice the "instruction" received.

In making the examination of conscience, the student would also examine, before God, the respect and obedience given to his superiors, love for all, especially friends and classmates, the good use of time, and the meeting of academic duties: "*Did I leave school without permission? At school, did I apply myself to my lessons? Did I cause others to be truant?*"

The *Conduct* indicated that the teacher could add other elements to the regular items of the point examined each day, in that, at the end of each block of weekly themes, was written: "*Additionally, did I not . . . ?*"

The directive that the *Conduct* gave to the teacher for this examination, to "make known in detail to the students the sins which they are liable to commit, without ever deciding whether the sin is mortal or venial. Teachers will, at the same time, seek to inspire horror of these sins and suggest the means of avoiding them."⁴⁴⁵ This is, indeed, the same directive that the founder and his teachers adopted, with even more detail, in the catechism classroom:

Teachers will never decide whether a sin is venial or mortal. They may only say, when they judge this to be the case, "That will offend God very much." "It is a sin very much to be feared." "It is a sin that has evil consequences." "It is a grievous sin." [If they truly believed it to be so.]⁴⁴⁶

There is no doubt that these practices – the reflection and the examination of conscience – formed the Christian conscience of the student. Moreover, Poutet and Pungier said of the examination of conscience that it was "an exercises of high psychological and spiritual value when performed under the gaze of God and made in order to please him."⁴⁴⁷

To the catechism, the reflection and the examination of conscience can be added the **readings** done in school, such as that of the second book, that is, "*a book of Christian instruction*," and of that used to learn to read in Latin, that is, the *Psalter*, as well as the *Rules of Decorum*, infused with the Christian spirit.

The education to think, feel, judge and live concretely as a Christian was also effected through the **Lasallian school as a whole**: through the overall **atmosphere**, the **subject matter** developed, the **materials** used, the **choices** made and the **practices** undertaken.

Concerning the **atmosphere**, it suffices to look at the entrance, the walls and the other places in the classroom to immediately realize the Christian identity of the one who was responsible for it and went there. The container of holy water, with enough liquid and with the aspergillum. The crucifix and pictures of Mary, Joseph, the Guardian Angel, the Child Jesus and the School of Jesus⁴⁴⁸ are present. Rosaries are in the cupboard. Of the five placards with sentences, two are of a religious character: "Listen attentively to the catechism" and "Pray with piety in Church and in school."

The question of the **subject matter** is a theme already visited and revisited. But it is essential to consider it when dealing with the Lasallian school as a Christian School. Repeating, then, one more time: while teaching secular material was also a "**strict obligation**" for the teacher, De La Salle maintained a hierarchy: the religious element was primary in their educational enterprise and the instruction about doctrinal content and Christian practices was fundamental to this element.

For his students, the explanation in their liturgical catechism given to all the faithful was useful. He asked, "Why is the Gospel explanation placed before the Mass of the Faithful, that is, before the Offertory?" His response could seem strange; there were two reasons, and the second was that "it is even more necessary for the faithful to be instructed in the truths of religion and the maxims of the holy Gospel than to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass."⁴⁴⁹ It could be added: more important than carrying out the other practices of the Christian life, the faithful person came to know its nature, obligations, intentionality and implementation through Christian education.

One whole section of meditations insisted on this primacy: teaching religion was the Brothers' "principal obligation, although other matters must not be neglected."⁴⁵⁰

The *Common Rules* corroborated this directive:

They will teach their pupils to read ... They will also teach them spelling and arithmetic ... They will, however, make it their first and principal care to teach their pupils the morning and evening prayers, the *Pater*, the *Ave*, the *Credo*, and the *Confiteor*, and these same prayers in French, the commandments of God and of the Church, the responses at holy Mass, the catechism, the duties of a Christian, and the maxims and practices that our Lord has left us in the holy Gospel.⁴⁵¹

And the *Bull of Approbation* of the Institute set it definitively:

That the Brothers teach the children not only reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic but, above all, that they fill their hearts with the precepts of Christianity and the Gospel.⁴⁵²

This is the general and persistent teaching, with discrepancies found in only one or two passages of De La Salle's writings, such as in a letter written to an anonymous Brother, in which the founder insisted on the necessity of studying the catechism and nothing else. Do not re-order the hierarchy.⁴⁵³

And the *Rules of Decorum*? Were they not secular? Yes, it is true that they were "learning of the order of the world."⁴⁵⁴ But was not the full title *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*? Life, as indicated earlier, should be Christian even in practicing civility: the Christian gentleman and the gentleman Christian.

In what it says about **materials** used, the teacher's handbook, that is, the *Conduct*, was "a text totally adapted to the Christian educational project,"⁴⁵⁵ but a number of the books used by the students were also of a religious tenor.⁴⁵⁶ Additionally, those given out as rewards were all about piety, as well as stamps and images distributed for the same purpose.⁴⁵⁷

As was the practice in the Christian context of the time, in the *Conduct* the illustrative examples were, whenever possible, taken from the religious world, as was the case when De La Salle's teaching manual explained the question mark ("Where is God?"), the exclamation mark ("O my God!"), parentheses ("Give (Jesus Christ says) as you would have given to you."), and the separation of syllables, with an equal pause – in reading – between them ("Ste-phen, full of faith and of the Ho-ly Spi-rit, per-formed great mir-a-cles").⁴⁵⁸

When a student made a mistake in reading, it was necessary to correct it. Thus, if he made a mistake several times reading the first syllable of "Lord, God all-powerful and eternal ...," he was to be told to memorize something from the book *The Imitation of Christ* or something from the *New Testament*.⁴⁵⁹ In handwriting class, "all lined models will consist of sentences from holy scripture, of Christian maxims taken from the works of the Fathers, or from devotional books."⁴⁶⁰ In spelling, the exercises given to students consisted of writing what they had taken from the catechism that week, as well as other things that were useful to life.⁴⁶¹

The entire combination of the **choices** made and the **practices** developed in the Lasallian school, even as they revealed the concrete priority given to the religious dimension, were also an implicit but very effective way of cultivating that dimension.

In De La Salle's school they tried, for example, to excuse students from class as little as possible. When authorizing absences, what reasons were permissible? In large part, they were of a religious character: a pilgrimage to a place distant from the city; attendance at the procession of the Blessed Sacrament in the student's home parish; participation in the feast day of the student's parish; the feast day of the patron of the father's profession, etc.⁴⁶²

As will be seen in due time, of the "offices" carried out by students, four were of a religious nature: the Reciter of Prayers, the Holy Water Bearer, the Rosary Carrier, and the Mass Officer.⁴⁶³ As noted earlier, showing piety and modesty were among the elements considered in the evaluation of the student: they were part of the conditions required for the student.⁴⁶⁴ According to the logic of the primacy of the religious element, when it was time to reward the students, those demonstrating piety received the most beautiful and valuable ones. Next came

awards for punctuality (recall how difficult it would be for the poor children to accomplish that) and only then for the most capable.⁴⁶⁵

The primary means for the Christian formation of the students was the **Christian teacher**. In the most radical of terms, there was no Christian education without Christian teachers.

In the Lasallian case, the teacher was someone who consecrated themselves to procuring God's glory through the educational work and someone who carried it out as a member of a Christian community of consecrated men.⁴⁶⁶ To be effective in offering a Christian education, he received an initial formation in which the religious element was substantial. In his ongoing formation, religious study continued constantly, as preparation for competent catechesis. According to Poutet's text, the religio-Christian dimension of his ongoing formation was determinative:

In speaking of the ongoing formation of the Lasallian educator, the qualifier "Christian" is applied since all the activities of this formation are penetrated or animated by the force of faith in a God who desires the happiness of his creation, in the midst of which his Son was incarnate, thus demonstrating the prodigious dignity of the human person.⁴⁶⁷

The teaching authority that this educator exercised was characterized by, if not to say identified with, an apostolate. Thus, along with his professional competence, he was urged to develop personally clearly spiritual practices.

De La Salle tried to make his teachers understand that, for the effectiveness of their apostolic work, they should cultivate an intimacy with God, staying joined to Jesus Christ, just as the branch of a tree that wants to bear fruit must remain attached to the trunk.⁴⁶⁸ In addition to insisting on that union, De La Salle insisted that they live a retired life and devote themselves to prayer. Retired, because "this is how God leads those he is preparing for something great," as he did with Saint Martin of Tours.⁴⁶⁹ Devoted to prayer because

You will not do them [the children] much good, however, if you do not possess in full measure the spirit of prayer, which gives a holy fervor to your words and makes them able to penetrate very effectively the depths of the hearts of your students.⁴⁷⁰

Except for one small passage,⁴⁷¹ which conflicts with the rest of Lasallian teaching on the point, according to De La Salle, the teacher prayed as a function of his ministry. By praying, he prepared to carry it out:

On the first school day after vacation, Brothers who teach school will receive Holy Communion at the community Mass to ask God for the light and the grace they need to instruct their pupils well and to bring them up and guide them in the spirit of Christianity.

After breakfast they will go to the oratory, where they will say the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus to dispose themselves for going to school and to ask our Holy Infant Jesus for his Spirit to be able to communicate it to the children under their guidance.

At 1:00 the Brothers will assemble in the oratory to say the Litany of Saint Joseph, Patron and Protector of the Community, to ask for his spirit and his assistance in the Christian education of the children.⁴⁷²

The ministry itself was, after carrying it out, also the object of the Christian teacher's prayer. In other words, once performed, he took it as a topic of his examination of conscience before God, which made the evaluation of the educative work a religious act, a spiritual exercise. This occurred in meditation in general and especially in the afternoon meditations during the spiritual retreat (focusing on academic activity) and in its own time, at the end of class each day: "On their return from school, the Brothers will go to the oratory, where there will be a short examen of the faults they may have committed and of their whole conduct during the day."⁴⁷³

In addition to prayer as a function of ministry, the Lasallian teacher had other spiritual exercises, all necessary for effective Christian education: "School work without the exercises does not go well," De La Salle wrote to Brother Mathias.⁴⁷⁴

Living in retirement, devotion to prayer and other spiritual exercises only made sense to someone who had faith. But for the Lasallian educator, faith became absolutely necessary for another reason. As addressed earlier, developing the spirit of Christianity in the student was part of the work of forming him as a Christian, but this was impossible if the teacher himself did not have such a spirit, the spirit of faith: “The spirit of the Institute, which is the spirit of faith, and the purpose of the Institute, which is the Christian instruction and education of youth.”⁴⁷⁵

Another necessary exercise of a spiritual nature arose here: the cultivation of the Word of God, meditation on it, reading it in study and, even more fundamental, “reading it prayerfully,” as we would say today. De La Salle saw that contact with the Holy Scriptures would, on the one hand, strengthen the educator’s soul in faith, which was the primary means of growing in the spirit of faith and, on the other, nourish him with the secrets of the divine wisdom that encompassed them and with which he could initiate his students in thinking, feeling and acting as Christians.⁴⁷⁶

The Christian educator’s faith, as De La Salle understood it, had to be dynamic, expressing itself day-to-day in his teaching. In Lasallian language, this dynamic, living faith was called zeal, which was a complement to the spirit of faith. One could say that zeal was the Lasallian name for faith in practice. It consisted of the interest and nurturing care of the educator for the good of the student, interest and care that included the promise to help him to live his Christian condition, not to renounce the covenant made with God in baptism.⁴⁷⁷

To close, two more things that De La Salle indicated were indispensable for the education offered by the school to be Christian: the example of the teacher’s life and his concrete love for his student.

De La Salle extolled example primarily for the educational impact it had:

Example makes a much greater impression on the mind and the heart than words, especially for children, for they do not yet have a mind sufficiently able to reflect, and they ordinarily model themselves on the example of their teachers. They are led more readily to do what they see done for them than what they hear told to them, above all when the teachers’ words are not in harmony with the teachers’ actions.⁴⁷⁸

Because such harmony was not always possible, in the *Meditations* he asked: “Do you teach your disciples anything you do not practice?” He warned them, “You have a reason to be ashamed if you have to teach these children what you do not know or to exhort them to practice what you do not do.”⁴⁷⁹

The object of the example to be given to the students by the Christian teacher was everything he taught them and required of them in terms of the Christian life: pious prayer, detachment from material goods, the practice of virtue in general and of charity in particular, in short, the holiness to which all Christians are called.⁴⁸⁰

In time, the obligation of the Lasallian educator to love his students and to make them love him would develop. But why? And for what? Because only as much as he showed them affection and won their affection would he and should he be able to serve them, like a drawn bow propelling them toward God, and make them to live like Christians: “You must consider the obligation you have to win their hearts to be a principal means to lead them to live in a Christian manner.” “Do you have these sentiments of charity and tenderness toward the poor children whom you have to educate?”⁴⁸¹

Assessment by Historians of Education

In general, authors appropriately place De La Salle in the Catholic Christian world and in the era of Christendom. A significant number connect him to the Catholic Reform which, given the circumstances, became the Counter Reformation. For Furet and Ozouf, his Institute was a “late creation” of that movement.⁴⁸² According to Giolitto, his activity was part of the crusade in favor of the school that the French ecclesiastical hierarchy launched from within that Catholic reform.⁴⁸³

Others do not fail to link the Christian character that he stamped on education to his religious sentiment. Valentini indicated how “his pedagogical principles are inspired by the Gospel,”⁴⁸⁴ and Scaglione saw his writings,

including the one on pedagogy, as also being motivated by a religious impulse,⁴⁸⁵ more precisely, by his apostolic zeal.

Those who base their understanding of De La Salle only on the *Conduct*, the day-to-day handbook for Lasallian educational practice, and are unfamiliar with the mystical tone of the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* do not begin to understand De La Salle's writing on the theological, "providential" origins of the Lasallian educational institution. Unfamiliar with the biographies or the recent studies done of them and with De La Salle's personal writings, they also fail to appeal to the texts on faith, again "providential," that De La Salle wrote regarding his own progressive involvement with the work of education that would result in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The fundamental purpose of De La Salle's school is clear to the authors. According to Bowen, for De La Salle, "instruction desires merely learned people. If they fulfill their divinely-appointed vocation, it requires education, that is, conversion and Christian cultivation."⁴⁸⁶ In Giufrida's view, "the goal of the (Lasallian) Institute, according to the *Conduct*, is essentially religious: the gratuitous education of the artisans and the poor to make them good Catholics."⁴⁸⁷ Regarding this accent placed on the religious aspect, some scholars, for essentially ideological reasons, give a more negative reading. Among them are Leaut and Glay, for whom the concept of popular education practiced by De La Salle was narrow, because in it "everything is subordinate, if not sacrificed, to Christian formation."⁴⁸⁸

Practically all recognize the consequences of the fact that De La Salle's school had a decidedly Christian purpose. There is amongst them a significant coincidence regarding the importance given to catechism in the school and to the means whereby that importance is shown, to the point that many of them, such as Clause, asserted that, in the Christian Schools, "catechism was taught almost exclusively,"⁴⁸⁹ along with reading, as was usual in the elementary schools of De La Salle's time. Zind is one of those who offered a counterpoint to this general impression: "This emphasis placed on the religious element does not mean, in any way, that secular education was ignored."⁴⁹⁰

The religious stamp that De La Salle put on his teachers, making them into a religious congregation, committed to teaching for their entire life not only as a professional option but also as a religious vow, and seen as people called to their task, is also emphatically underscored. De La Salle "elevated teaching to a true ministry and a quasi-priesthood."⁴⁹¹ Scholars also note the centrality of the religious element in the formation of the teacher. According to Butts, De La Salle "focused on religion at the core" of this preparation.⁴⁹²

Few, however, analyze the relationship between the teacher's educational activity and the vision and mystical drive that De La Salle wanted to guide and motivate him or, in other words, with the spirituality of the educator.

Student-Centered Education

5

The 17th Century and the Child: Elements

Certainly, one cannot ignore the existence, throughout history, of cases of observation of children and the variety of their aptitudes, and as a result the diversity of educational treatment they merit, that still speak today. It suffices to recall the names of Quintiliano, among the ancient Romans, and Luís Vives, among the Spanish of the Renaissance.

But, as Arenilla and others recalled, “historically, psychology entered the school at the beginning of the 20th century, in a time in which the Binet-Simon psychometric scale of intelligence was used to detect students intellectually incapable of receiving normal instruction,”⁴⁹³ which, of course, did not all happen in a moment. Pedagogy was already being enriched by psychological elements in the 18th and 19th centuries, with the contributions of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Fröbel.

In the 17th century – that is, De La Salle’s time – psychology was in its infancy and had barely begun to crawl or, in other words, its recent seeds were just beginning to sprout, and it was beginning to separate itself from philosophy and to deal with aspects of reality that were previously studied by philosophy.

Children were seen very much in parallel to adults, resulting in a prevalently negative view. The child was a small person, but without the prerogatives of an adult. On the other hand, the child was identified by the lack of the use of reason, by ignorance and weakness. Added to this was the idea, from Christian antiquity, that the child was born marked and even corrupted by original sin, which inclined him or her naturally to evil. The idea of frailty was, in a certain way, confirmed and reinforced by high rates of infant mortality, caused by factors such as the lack of hygiene and medical backwardness, such that the loss of a child, in general, produced only a fatalistic resignation, if not indifference. If a child died, “some might be sad. But the general rule was that this should not cause a great concern: soon, another would replace it.”⁴⁹⁴ Such contextual elements help to understand the concern existing in education at the time with protecting the child, being vigilant over them and repressing in them that which would incline them to evil.

On the other hand, as science, especially with Bacon, began to study reality through experimentation, psychology began to undertake more systematic observation of the person to better understand their psychological development and their behavior in general. Around 1680, the child began to merit greater attention, not just as a miniature human, but specifically as a child.

Pedagogical realism, a characteristic of the 17th century, accompanied this movement. A typical case is that of Locke. In his *Thoughts on Education*, he suggested studying the nature and capability of the child.⁴⁹⁵ He reflected on the “natural temperaments” and the differentiated capabilities of children and tried to classify children accordingly. He suggested, in dealing with children, being attentive to the difficulties arising from these “temperaments” and aptitudes and to what to combat or cultivate in them. Additionally, he called for making the thinking and language used appropriate to the age and intellectual capability of the child.

Likewise, the Jansenists, in their Little Schools, were known at the time for their respect of childhood and they already insisted on the necessity of the tutor knowing his students and adapting his educational practice to them.

As an example, one could speak of Coustel, saying that “a tutor, to act with the students, should know the variety of spirits that he can guide,”⁴⁹⁶ just as a doctor should discover the specifics of bodies to prescribe the remedies that will help them, and a farmer should know the specific realities of the land that he cultivates to know what best to sow. If he did not do so, opportunities, time and work would be lost insisting on developing subjects and skills for which the students did not have an inclination rather than focusing efforts on developing the various abilities found in them.

De La Salle, living and operating in that context, shared the idea of the frailty and limitations of the child and of the pedagogical corollaries derived therefrom. But, by faith, he added the certainty of the extraordinary dignity of the child as a son and daughter of God, consecrated to him and called to the eminently Christian perfection called holiness. He balanced the idea of the inclination to evil with the possibility of overcoming it through the development not only of acts but of good habits themselves. Moreover, the fact of his having totally changed the direction of his life to dedicate it to the education of children, beyond a desire to contribute to their salvation, also signified, on his part, an existential act of faith in the possibility of them being transformed and growing.

De La Salle: Centrality of the Student

Commentators often skip over the theme of centrality in the Lasallian school. According to it, the point of departure, the center, and the destination were not the programs or other factors outside the student. The center was not the teacher, with his interests and preferences, even his comforts. This according to De La Salle’s own formulation: in defending the habit adopted by his religious teachers, he noted that such clothing was appropriate for them, “particularly those who must leave their community residence and go to schools in distant districts for the convenience of their students.”⁴⁹⁷ For whom? The students, not the teachers.

In the Lasallian school, in effect, the center was the student himself, with his history, beginning with his origins in terms of genetics and environment; his own personality; his current and future needs and interests. In the Lasallian school, the point of departure, the center, and the destination was the good of the student.

In the language of the founder of the Christian Schools, the teacher’s role was not simply to give the student whatever education occurred to the teacher, or that he – the teacher – thought important, because the Lasallian Institute was born to give the student “a suitable education.”⁴⁹⁸ The educator will be accountable to God for this, among other things, that is to say, whether he taught his students “the things that they needed to know.”⁴⁹⁹

In summary, in the Lasallian school, there was one lord and master: the student; and there was someone who served: the teacher. De La Salle stated this explicitly in the language, obviously, of his time: “Have you wasted time, in a word, which in your profession no longer belongs to you any more than servants’ time belongs to them, obliged as they are to use all of it in their master’s service, as you are for the benefit of your students?”⁵⁰⁰ It is obvious why some see a Copernican shift in De La Salle’s school, at least regarding the position of the people who comprised it.

Each one of the students and each group of students deserved, therefore, their teacher’s attention, as, according to Poutet, took place, for the reason already alluded to, with various internal groups of students of Saint Yon, those of the free boarding school, the “difficult” students, and the delinquents: “All these people belong to very different, even opposed, social categories. For all, De La Salle required that his Brothers show great esteem.”⁵⁰¹

Taking the student as the center of the educational process meant, for De La Salle, **knowing him** as well as possible, such that one could **handle him appropriately**, that is, work with him in a **differentiated, adapted and personalized** way. This required **flexibility** in developing the educational process; and as a result, a **complexification** of the process. But this signified, in De La Salle’s time, a **pedagogical advance**.

Knowing in Order to Handle Appropriately

One of the fundamentals of Lasallian pedagogy was the **knowledge** that the teacher should have of his students, of each and every one. De La Salle expressly and emphatically affirmed the necessity of knowing, of this

discernment between one and the other of one's students. Why was this knowing and discernment necessary? They were the condition for appropriate pedagogical **handling** of each student, of knowing what they could accomplish.

This pair – to know/to handle – appeared in De La Salle's pedagogical writing, such as the *Conduct*. As will be seen, in the second part of this text, he required that, at the beginning of the school year, the teacher receive a Register of the "good and bad qualities" of each of the students that would be entrusted to him, in order to know them and "to know how to handle them." The point was echoed in the third part, entitled "The Training of New Teachers," drafted and referred to, but not printed in the "first" edition of 1720. In it, it taught new teachers that "a young teacher should carefully study the spirit, customs, and inclinations of the students, in this way becoming more likely to succeed in dealing with them in a manner likely to be acceptable."⁵⁰²

But this twofold concern – to know/to handle – was also present in the *Meditations* – a text of a more spiritual nature but still with many forays into the pedagogical arena: "This ought also to be one of the main concerns of those who instruct others: to be able to understand their students and to discern the right way to guide them."⁵⁰³

To Know

From the theoretical point of view, this aspect was developed more in the *Mediations* than in the *Conduct*. It was the object of De La Salle's considerations and directions principally in the 33rd meditation in his *Meditations for Sundays*.

In it, John Baptist de La Salle offered a commentary on the Gospel in which Jesus Christ referred to himself as the Good Shepherd, and presented his way of handling his sheep as a model to be followed by the teacher in his way of being and acting with his students. In the first point of this inspired text, De La Salle emphasized that one of the fundamental qualities that the teacher should have as the good shepherd of his little flock was to know his sheep and to know them individually. He closed by recommending to his teachers that they ask God, "frequently and earnestly," for this "understanding and discernment of spirits ... They are most necessary for you in guiding those placed in your care."⁵⁰⁴

Calling attention to De La Salle's expression "discernment of spirits," this refers to a usual expression in the practice of spiritual direction, but not in the educational process. Discernment of spirits was a task that was not satisfied by a general knowing of the human interior, but that specialized in seeing clearly the concrete reality of the one entrusted to a director of souls. De La Salle understood this discernment, this identifying probing of spirits; he had always had a spiritual director and always directed others spiritually. Recalling that, for De La Salle, integral education included the transcendent dimension, it is not strange that, for him, the direction of souls was not simply a spiritual practice but, equally, a pedagogical requirement.

Thus De La Salle and his first teachers took care to know, as well as possible, not only their students in general, but each one of them in particular. They showed effectively that they knew the many psychological traits of the children with whom they worked.⁵⁰⁵ The *Conduct* demonstrated how they created conditions and instruments not just for sporadic moments but for a whole systematic process of observation of the students, in light of their more complete and exact knowledge of them.

It was in function of this knowing that in this practical pedagogical work they were directed on the use of so-called "Registers" to keep in an orderly way the observations they made:

One thing that can contribute much to maintenance of order in the schools is that there be well-kept records or registers. There must be six kinds of Registers: 1) the Admissions Register, 2) the Register of Promotion in Lessons, 3) the Register of Levels of Lessons, 4) the Register of the Good and Bad Qualities of Students, 5) the Register of the Bench Leader, and 6) the Register of Home Visitations. The first two Registers shall be for the use of the Inspector of Schools. The teacher shall make use of the next two, and the last two shall be held by the students.⁵⁰⁶

On the “Admissions Register”⁵⁰⁷ the data referring to each student admitted from the beginning to the end of the school year was recorded: the school, the year, the month and the date of enrollment for each student were recorded. Information on the family: father, mother (or guardian), with address, floor, parish, etc. Data on the student: name, surname, age; whether he had made his First Communion and was confirmed; the lessons and levels of lessons in which he was placed; the planned attendance schedule (full, or with authorized absences); prior schooling (schools attended and reasons for transfers). Guilhem considered the questionnaire nearly as detailed as that of Décroly to the parents of his students at the Hermitage.⁵⁰⁸

During the year, to the extent that the student came to be known better, the Director would complete this Register with new data of interest: frequency of receiving the sacraments; performance as a student: regular attendance and punctuality, application to studies, ease or difficulty in learning; regularity or not in promotion through lessons; knowledge of the catechism and prayers; and dismissal from school. Maximin, in seeing the recorded data, asked: “Is this not already the beginning of the current idea of a medical-teaching record?”⁵⁰⁹

Particularly interesting, as a way of coming to a precise and deep knowledge of the student, was the “Register of the Good and Bad Qualities,”⁵¹⁰ a record of each student, created by his respective teacher at the end of the school year, that is, in 17th-century France, at the end of August.

It was an x-ray of the reality of the student, as his teacher perceived him through the school year: his character; his behavior as a student; his religious life (“piety”) and moral, behavioral life; the defects and qualities seen in him; the “offices” that he carried out during the year and how he performed in that task; and the position of his family in relationship to him as a son and as a student.

It alerted one to the aspects to have in mind in handling a student and gave pedagogical indications that would be fruitful in dealing with him. The teacher of Lambert du Long, for example, indicated that “he feels it greatly when he is reprimanded,” and that of François de Teriux said that for him “it is necessary to win him over and encourage him to do things well.”

The Director, receiving these records, passed them on to the teacher for the next year, who used them in the first three months of class and later returned them. The *Conduct*, regarding such Registers, which were true psycho-pedagogical records, “descriptive assessments,” as one might say today, gave this interesting direction: “The Director shall keep all these Registers and shall compare those of previous years with those of the subsequent years, comparing those drawn up by different teachers who have taught this same class and these same students to see if their perceptions agree or differ, in whole or in part.”⁵¹¹

Completed annually, this Register came to constitute a dossier that accompanied and chronicled a student’s entire academic experience. Magaz’s observation about this instrument, while obvious, is nonetheless important: Such a Register “supposes, on the part of the teacher, constant and minute observation of all the students.”⁵¹²

The “Register of Promotion in Lessons” and that of “Levels of Lessons” were also important Registers completed each month.⁵¹³ The “Promotion in Lessons” Register listed, in five columns, the name of the student; the day of registration in the lesson; the month of that registration; the day of promotion in level; and the month of that promotion. The “Levels of Lessons” Register also included other data on the academic life of each student during the month, such as: late arrivals, unauthorized absences, and results in reciting the diocesan catechism.

The Registers of “Bench Leaders” and “Home Visitations”⁵¹⁴ also allowed them to follow the conduct of the students, as would be clear in the study of the “offices” of the school.

Commenting on these various Registers, Anselme wrote:

John Baptist de La Salle knew and practiced differential psychology under a different form. The method was not rigorous and scientific: intuition and judgment played a large role. It was more attentive to the moral side than to the intellectual and physical. The goal was the same: know the student in order to better educate him.⁵¹⁵

Although the fruit of an empirical psychology, the variety of these Registers and the multiplication of data contained in them, in constituting a true x-ray of the being and action of the students, allowed each to be known effectively in a given moment, making one aware of their development across their academic career, to determine

more easily the way to work with them and to be more objective and effective in undertaking educational practices such as the choice of students to fill various offices, or the determination of awards to be given or punishments to apply.

Further improving the attention given in the Lasallian school to the student and the means used to know them most precisely, to the concrete means of the “Registers” one must add the importance given by the *Conduct* to the practice termed vigilance, that is, attention to the student maintained by the teacher at all times and places.

Additionally, it is necessary to recall that the students spent approximately forty hours a week at school and, during that time, were constantly under the eye of and in relationship with the same teacher, which put the teacher in a unique position to capture all the nuances of the reality of each one of his students.

Handling Appropriately

In speaking of the realistic sense that marked De La Salle’s character, studies often underline his capacity for creating appropriate solutions to the various circumstances that he had to confront.

In doing so, he operated with a unique liberty, given the educational context in which he lived. He and his followers were neither subject to requirements, nor suffered the pressures of organizations such as the ministry or secretariat of education. They enjoyed an autonomy not only in the organization of academic terms and schedules, in the adoption of work methods and techniques and in the use of disciplinary regimes and the form of conducting classes, but also in the choice of subjects and the selection and preparation of teachers, within, obviously, the cultural conditions of the time, especially those goals of education and the hierarchy of the subject matter according to the interests of the Church. An important element in determining their educational practices was the concrete needs of the clientele attending their schools. In this practice, they tried to give each student **differentiated, adapted and personalized** attention.

Differentiated Attention

De La Salle believed in or accepted using different approaches to attend to different types of students and to their varied educational needs. At Saint Yon, with the various and different human groups that functioned simultaneously there,⁵¹⁶ he applied “an intelligently differentiated pedagogy,” as Poutet observed.⁵¹⁷ Thus, with the “difficult” students and delinquents, he worked with more or less close degrees of accompaniment, with a distinct disciplinary regime, with freedom progressively increased with a variety of subjects and tasks.

In the elementary school, as will be explained in more detail later, the frequency of tests, that is, giving them monthly, meant each student could advance at his own pace, differentiating one student from the others. The Register of promotion in lessons recorded this individually differentiated development.

Adapted Attention

To think about this Lasallian practice, it is helpful to begin by remembering the pairing referenced some pages back: to know/to handle. In other words, it is useful to recall yet again that the data on the student, gathered from the hour of enrollment, and the observations later made to know him better, had as their end the ability to direct educational activity, making it appropriate to the concrete reality of each student.

Thus, if the parents of an older student said, at registration, that “they hope to have the child learn a trade,”⁵¹⁸ they could be sure that the school would adapt to his situation: according to “the calling they will follow ... the students should be taught to write either round hand or slanted hand.”⁵¹⁹

For De La Salle, such care in tailoring action to the different student was not simply a pedagogical requirement and demand. It was a ministerial virtue, upon which the Lasallian teacher was invited to meditate before God, and about the practice of which he would give account to God.

Fundamentally, the Lasallian school tailored and adapted itself, **its characteristics and other circumstances, to the needs of its “clientele.”**

The clientele were the students, both as a social group and as each individual who comprised it.

As a group, they were primarily the poor children whose needs De La Salle served and to whom he applied his pedagogical science and educational practice. Thus, the academic subjects set in the *Conduct*, as already seen, were thought about for the popular class, adapted to what they needed and not imposed according to some principle of authority external to them.

Concerning the individuals who constituted the group: If a student, for example, made a mistake in calculations referring to the four operations? On Tuesdays and Fridays, the teacher would correct him individually by giving him “questions according to the needs” he saw in him.⁵²⁰

The Lasallian school was prepared to adapt to the **physical, social or psychological characteristics of the student.**

This is a point to which De La Salle often returned in his writings, whether in the form of a recommendation or reminder, or of a question:

You must win them over to practice the maxims of the holy Gospel, and to this end you must give them means that are easy and accommodated to their age.

You will give an account to God ... whether you taught your disciples the subjects in the catechism that they must know according to their age and ability.

Have you been careful to teach them the maxims and practices of the holy Gospel and to see that they practice them? Have you suggested to them practices appropriate to their age and condition?

[You must have] an altogether special care to help them put these virtues into practice, as well as all the good of which they are capable at their age.⁵²¹

In the practical realm, at Saint Sulpice, for example, De La Salle, rather than having primary classes, “divided the students in three classes, such that it was, in this way, easier to give them lessons adapted to their age.”⁵²² The *Conduct* dictated that “depending on their age ... the students should be taught to write either round hand or slanted hand.”⁵²³

Even at the physical level, the **size** of the student was taken into consideration. What Blain asserted referring to age, he also said with regard to this aspect, in speaking of the changes that De La Salle and his two companions made at the school of Saint Sulpice when they became responsible: “They divided the students into three classes, so that it was easier to give them lessons appropriate to their size.”⁵²⁴

This same factor determined the measurements of the furniture in the Lasallian school. According to the 1720 *Conduct*, the tables and benches were to have precise dimensions (different heights) such that each child would be conveniently seated according to their size.⁵²⁵

In order for the students to be able to make the hand movements necessary for handwriting, they received sticks, each with three grooves. The size of the grooves was not the same on all of the sticks, varying according to the size of the fingers of the student to whom it was given.

Adaptation to social conditions referred to the **origins** and the **status** or **condition** of the students. Regarding **origins**, the initial Lasallian schools did not serve students from the interior of the country. In them,

Schedules, plans, methods, academic manuals, everything is specially adapted to the needs of the children of the cities. The *Rules of Decorum*, which serve for reading and introduction to good manners, in some of its directions did not apply absolutely to the children from the country. The Lasallian experience was essentially urban.⁵²⁶

The word **status**, in the French language and in its use by De La Salle, could have various meanings: the state of life (priest, religious, lay, married, celibate); social economic (nobility/plebian, rich/poor); or equally, profession. Referring to the state of life and the socio-economic condition, the founder noted that there was a way of eating,

dressing, housing, and even sinning linked to the state and “condition” of each one.⁵²⁷ Likewise, there is an education according to the status and condition.

Related to this, in referring to the duties of the parents to their children, he said that the first were “to feed, to dress and to educate” them “according to their condition.”⁵²⁸ When he opened the boarding school at Saint Yon, he gave the boarders rules not only “according to their age,” but also “and their condition.”⁵²⁹ To help their students in their self-examination of their religious, fraternal and professional life, which they made at the end of the year, he posed the question:

Have you been careful to teach them the maxims and practices of the holy Gospel and to see that they practice them? Have you suggested to them practices appropriate to their age and condition?⁵³⁰

In the **psychological** arena, the Lasallian teacher observed his students and sought to accommodate his educational activity to factors such as the student’s **way of being**; his **inclinations**; his **qualities**; his **level**, also described as capacity or reach; his legitimate **desires**; his **personal rhythm**.

Inspired by a text from Saint Paul,⁵³¹ De La Salle reminded his teachers that they should “admonish the unruly, ... rouse up those who lack courage, support the weak.”⁵³² In other words, they should bear in mind, in their actions, the **way of being** of each student. One of the passages in which this is expressed most explicitly is – again – from the beautiful mediation on the Good Shepherd.

They must show more mildness toward some, more firmness toward others. There are those who call for much patience, those who need to be stimulated and spurred on, some who need to be reprovved and punished to correct them of their faults, others who must be constantly watched over to prevent them from being lost or going astray.⁵³³

The most illustrative case of this topic is the chapter of the *Conduct* that gave directions on “Children Who Must or Must Not Be Corrected.”⁵³⁴ In it, it teaches that students should not be punished indiscriminately, but that the temperament of each student needed to be taken into account. In other words, the criterion of correction was not simply the nature and seriousness of the fault committed, but also, and even more so, the type of student who committed it. An entire typology of students was set forth in this chapter, with the way of treating each of them. Poutet summarized it as follows:

The wrong-doers have to learn to “bring themselves to some [attitude of] penitence.” To the poorly educated, the selfish and the ill-tempered: give them an office [class role]. For the insolent: the silence of the teacher. To the inconsiderate and chatterboxes: put them near colleagues who pay attention. With the recalcitrant and stubborn: handle them with an even temper, punishing them only for the most grave faults. To those undermined by their parents: make observations to them gently and in private. In the case of those who miss class: speak with their parents, assign them an office [class role].⁵³⁵

For Everett, in the pages in which De La Salle wrote of this adequacy of punishment to each guilty student, he

showed himself clearly “psychological,” and presented, still in pre-scientific terms, as is logical, a notable treatise on the various modes of treating children with problems [...] School psychologists and tutors today would certainly applaud him as a precursor to their work.⁵³⁶

The chapter of the Lasallian teaching manual that deals with the various types of students who miss class offered a parallel case.⁵³⁷ It described those who did it because they were frivolous and undisciplined, wild, or had a distaste for school or for the teacher and pointed out the appropriate way to try to have each one of them attend school regularly.

To this, it would be necessary to add the particular solicitude recommended toward sick students, the very small,⁵³⁸ and those who had recently arrived. Concerning this last group, it is worth citing this wise observation:

Finally, teachers must abstain from correcting children who are just beginning school. It is necessary, first, to know their minds, their natures, and their inclinations. They should be told from time to time what they

are to do. They should be placed near some students who acquit themselves well of their duties. In this way they may learn by practice and by example. They should ordinarily be in school about two weeks before being corrected.⁵³⁹

“Begin by knowing them.” Rousseau wrote and justified the same thing years later: “Begin by studying better your students, because you certainly do not know them.”⁵⁴⁰

From today’s perspective, as a whole these wise and perspicacious directives lacked, certainly, the precision and language of the later science of psychology. It was merely the fruit of long and interested observation and of the accumulated experience of the teachers who, with De La Salle, wrote the *Conduct*. Thus, Anselme, referring to the various classifications of the students established by the Lasallian teachers based on their practical observation, suggested that “this is a prototype of a typology of students, which prepared for the modern typology (Stern, Spranger, Kroch...).”⁵⁴¹

The option of teaching one or another kind of writing based on the age of the student has already been noted. But the *Conduct* also anticipated another factor that could motivate that choice: “Depending on ...their **ability**, ...the students should be taught to write either round hand or slanted hand.”⁵⁴²

In other cases, the **qualities** themselves of each student determined the choices and decisions. The qualities required for each assigned “office” were described in detail in the *Conduct*. They were to be taken into consideration in choosing who would be named to each “office” and for the student to remain in that office.⁵⁴³

Of the Almoner, for example, that is, the student charged with collecting the food brought by students in better economic circumstances to share with the poorer students, or those who were proposed for this, the normative text of Lasallian pedagogy said: “Teachers shall put in charge of this duty someone who is pious and shows affection for the poor, and, especially, not inclined to gluttony.”⁵⁴⁴

Of the Visitors of the Absent Students:

Visitors shall be chosen from among the students who are most loyal and most assiduous in coming to school. They should demonstrate good judgment, honesty, good behavior, no taint of falsehood, and the ability not to let themselves be influenced.⁵⁴⁵

Or, of the Bell Ringer:

This officer should be very assiduous in attending school, careful, vigilant, exact, and very punctual in ringing the bell on time.⁵⁴⁶

The repeatedly-demonstrated Lasallian concern was that the content explained be understood by the student and that he be able to act upon it when asked, which required that that which was explained or asked be within the **reach** of the student, not outside his **level** or **capacity**.

In doctrinal terms, De La Salle formulated this requirement telling his teachers that it was their obligation “to come down to them by accommodating them [the children] at their level”; or that they “must give them instructions that are adapted to their capacity,” that they might hear the teacher’s voice like that of a good shepherd; or that they “will give an account to God whether you were exact to teach ... according to their age and ability.”⁵⁴⁷

The Training of New Teachers said that new teachers, as one of the requirements of teaching, must acquire “facility in speaking and expressing oneself clearly and with order and in a way that the children one teaches can grasp.”⁵⁴⁸

In the area of living, the anonymous author of the *Éloge historique*, in speaking of the Sunday School created by De La Salle, recalled that the students who attended “learned to read, to write, to count and to design, according to each one’s capacity.”⁵⁴⁹

The *Conduct*, addressing the distribution of students, stated that “after having admitted a student and ascertained the level of ability, in the manner explained in the previous chapter, the Inspector of Schools shall assign

the student to the class, the lesson, and the seat in the room.”⁵⁵⁰ It prescribed that, during morning prayer, the teacher was to give the students a reflection, but at their level. It indicated that on Fridays, each student would hand in, solved, a certain number of calculations (referring to the four operations) that had been given to them previously, always according to the capacity. Similarly, the explanation of the catechism as well as the responses to be asked of the students to the sub-questions that the teacher posed to him were to correspond to his ability. The level of the student would also be the determining factor in setting the number of pages he would be given to read, as punishment, when he made a mistake in reading training.

These various concerns on the part of the teacher were present in the catechism class, where they were particularly necessary, given that the class was taught to all the students – of various sizes, ages, abilities, qualities and levels – in one class. In this lesson, the teacher began by asking the stronger students and only later questioned the weaker ones. Asking first one, then the other, he kept in mind the strengths and weaknesses of each student as well as their various degrees of advancement in the material taught.

The reference above to the Sunday School brings to mind another dimension of the student that the Lasallian school tried to serve: their legitimate **desires**, especially when they were older, according to the already-referenced testimony of Doncourt.

Regarding the **pace**, for example, at which each student advanced, it is true that there was a concern not to move from a “lesson or order of lesson if the anticipated time had not been spent on them” for their learning.⁵⁵¹ However, promotions were assessed frequently – more precisely, monthly. It depended on each student whether he was promoted to the next lesson or level of lesson, such that each month students could advance in some materials and stay put in others. This system, in addition to resulting in different paces for advancement, determined by the capacity and effort of each student, offered the student, if held back, the benefit of staying, normally, just one month and on a reduced portion of the material. Not a full year, never for extensive material.

Beyond this, there are other passages in the *Conduct*, according to which the teacher was to be attentive to the pace of the student, sometimes to follow it, other times to improve it, if necessary. If the beginner, for example, lacked ease and speed in writing,

if they are slow, [they should] be urged to write fast ... If a student is naturally quick, it will be necessary only to arrange correctly the student’s hand, arm, and body. After having been taught what to do, the students should be allowed to practice by themselves. Restrain them, however, and moderate the students who are too active.⁵⁵²

But all of this, again, was about being attentive to the concrete reality of each student:

The following are examples of a teacher’s conduct which becomes unbearable to those in the teacher’s charge ... Third, the teacher is too insistent in urging upon a child some performance which the child is not disposed to do, and the teacher does not permit the child the leisure or the time to reflect.⁵⁵³

Among the **other circumstances** that the teacher had to pay attention to, in the first place, was the **student’s attendance plan**. That was, for example, an additional factor in determining the type of writing the student would be taught, beyond the ones already listed: his inclination, his age and the profession anticipated for him.⁵⁵⁴

The circumstances of the agreed academic schedule, along with the specific needs of the student, produced norms such as the following, which could never be applied in schools today:

Should it happen that some students will not be continuing in school much longer, and that they need to write for a longer period than the others in order to learn to write sufficiently well, they may be permitted to write at other times during school hours; however, they may not write during the time devoted to the reading of manuscripts, to prayers, and to catechism.⁵⁵⁵

The coordination of the school **furniture** with the students’ tasks was also to be attended to (for example, those writing would have a special table, that is, with a tilted top), as was the accommodation of the **lesson times** with the number of students: “It is not possible in this *Conduct* to set the duration of the lessons of each class, because the number of students in each lesson is not always the same.”⁵⁵⁶

Likewise, the development of pedagogical treatment according to the **progress made** by the students served, as happened with the delinquents at Saint Yon, was to be considered. Last of all, attention was to be given to the **proportionality** between the correction/punishments and the seriousness of the faults for which they made amends: of the penances, the *Conduct* simply said that they “should be remedial and proportionate to the faults committed.”⁵⁵⁷ Concerning corrections, it is more specific: “It must be proportionate to the fault both in nature and in degree.”⁵⁵⁸

Personalized Attention

In the previous passage, reference was made to the notable role that historians of education attribute to De La Salle and his teachers concerning the institution of the simultaneous mode of teaching, to the extent that many simply call this mode the method of De La Salle and the Brothers. We also recalled that the Brothers’ role was certainly fundamental: that De La Salle and his teachers were determinative in the systematization, spreading and defense of this type of teaching. To emphasize only this role, however, can give a mistaken or, at least, incomplete idea of the method of Lasallian work.

In reality, the *Conduct* described a school in which the teachers, along with the simultaneous mode of teaching, not infrequently also used the individual mode, with personalized attention to each student, without wanting to consign all of them to an arbitrary standard.

De La Salle, in one of his meditations, offering a commentary on the miracle in which Jesus cured the deaf mute,⁵⁵⁹ a meditation written for one of the Sundays after Pentecost, indicated that there was a “gift of tongues” proper to the educator and that this gift was “to know how to speak in the right way to each one of them,” “to tell everyone what he needs to hear,” inspired by God’s own example, who “does not win over all souls by the same means.”⁵⁶⁰

The Formation of New Teachers specified for the teachers a specific moment to say to each student this word, thought of and consciously chosen for him: “To speak to them alone, one at a time, at the end of class, to encourage them to perform their duty well.”⁵⁶¹

The most frequent moment for this personal contact – including physical – primarily with the young ones, occurred during handwriting lessons. During the time when the teacher was giving the student explanations of the position to maintain in writing, if necessary, “teachers will themselves place them in the posture which the students should maintain, with each limb where it should be.” When teaching the way to hold writing instruments, it was necessary to arrange the hand of the student and to put the pen between the student’s fingers. For the beginning students of writing – and only for them – the teacher would guide their hands from time to time. The teacher worked individually with each and every one of the writing students every day, checking to see whether or not they were learning what he was teaching them about how to learn this art.⁵⁶² Finally, the student considered capable was taught, individually, to sharpen the pen, in a ceremony prescribed in detail in the *Conduct*.⁵⁶³

In the same way, in reviewing and correcting the student’s spelling exercise, the teacher worked with each one in a very personalized way.⁵⁶⁴

Requirement: Flexibility

On the one hand, in Lasallian education, there were constant principles and precise regulations, defined ways of doing things. On the other, more than once, in paying attention to the needs of the students, to their characteristics and other circumstances, one sees that, along with this rigorous organization of the Lasallian school, there co-existed a true flexibility in structures, organization and practices.

The hour of sundown, for example, affected the schedule of daily catechism, which was normally given between 4:00 and 4:30 pm. From November 15th to January 15th – winter time in Europe – this lesson was moved forward: the teacher gave it from 3:30 to 4:00, so that the students could leave earlier, that is, while there was still light, to go home.⁵⁶⁵

Another way in which flexibility was shown was in determining the minimum age for beginning to attend school: "No child shall be admitted who is not fully six years old unless, in some individual case, size and intelligence makes up for the lack of age."⁵⁶⁶

Still another was the advancement of the expected time for beginning the learning process. In principle, as is already known, "it is necessary that students should know how to read both French and Latin perfectly well before they are taught to write." In principle, because

if, however, it should happen that there are any who have reached twelve years of age and have not yet begun to write, they may be put in the writing class at the same time that they begin Latin provided that they know how to read French well and correctly and that it seems that they will not be attending school for a time long enough in which to learn to write sufficiently well. This is a matter to which the Director and the Inspector of Schools will attend.⁵⁶⁷

To attend to this norm of meeting the students who needed to learn to write, a specific and appropriate reorganization of time was planned for them and, if necessary, a "promotion out of necessity," similar to the "automatic promotion," long before that expression was coined:

The time of these students who will have little time to learn to write, will be distributed as indicated above in proportion to the time which they have at their disposal for this purpose. They will, of necessity, be advanced at the end of the assigned period whether they do or do not know what they should know in order to be advanced.⁵⁶⁸

Flexibility also translated into a curtailing of the instruction period of a particular subject: "When all the lines of the alphabet chart have been learned, but before beginning syllables, students will continue to study the entire alphabet, until the end of the month."⁵⁶⁹ However, if a student learned the entire alphabet at the beginning of the month, he would be promoted to the syllable chart.

It was also present in the suspension, or at least the modification, of prescriptions that were, at first glance, absolute. The suspension, for example, of the prescription of regular attendance and punctuality.

On regular attendance:

Children will be permitted to absent themselves from school in order to buy stockings, shoes, and so forth. They will be permitted to absent themselves even to have their clothes mended; however, these permissions will be given only when it appears absolutely necessary⁵⁷⁰

and

Certain students may sometimes be permitted to absent themselves from school during the week on market days to go to work or on account of their employment. This permission may be given provided that the absence is not in the afternoon and is only for the purpose of going to work and for nothing else.⁵⁷¹

On punctuality:

Students must be assiduous in coming to school, and must never miss class without permission, and must be present every morning at 7:30 and every afternoon at 1:00 ... A specific student can still be accepted if work or the fulfillment of some other obligation requires arrival at school later than the others; such a student must, however, come at a definitely arranged time; and no one shall be accepted who does not attend catechism and prayers.⁵⁷²

How many lines should each student studying the *Syllabary* read each time? Two to three. According to what? According to the number of students in the class and the time that the teacher has.⁵⁷³

It was even necessary to be flexible in the amount of punishment to be given:

It is not possible to determine precisely the number of times that it may be given each day, because of the different circumstances that may render it obligatory to use it more or less frequently.⁵⁷⁴

Consequence: Increased Complexity

This concern to serve students in a differentiated, appropriate and personalized way and this flexibility of structure, organization and academic practices in function of the needs of the students, of their characteristics and of other circumstances, certainly made the organization and functioning of the Lasallian school and its classes complex. In the case of the classes,

In the classroom, corresponding, as much as possible, to a specific age, the students were unequal concerning their learning ability and unequally gifted regarding the subjects taught. In this way, each student could not spend the entire day in a set group: there might be, for example, amongst the readers on civility (the 8th level of reading), those who wrote on the 6th level of writing and worked on the first level in arithmetic.⁵⁷⁵

As a corollary to this – it is easy to imagine the availability that such primacy of persons and adaptation to them asks of the teacher.

Significance: Pedagogical Advancement

The study of this characteristic of Lasallian education shows us De La Salle's contribution, first to give attention to the psychological dimension of educational work. As Everett observed, the Lasallian psychological focus appeared, among other things, in the analysis that De La Salle made of the causes of the difficulties students have in learning, in their bad behavior and their absences, as well as in the description of how to deal with the different types of students with their problems.⁵⁷⁶

With his observations and directions, John Baptist de La Salle also contributed to what is called the discovery of childhood:

De La Salle gave great importance to the observation of childhood (meditation on the Good Shepherd, register of qualities, typology of students regarding correction ...). Such systematic observation of school-aged children could not fail to have important consequences. While, in the era of Saint John Baptist de La Salle, childhood was not recognized as a specific age, it is later, during the 18th and 19th centuries, seen as a period of characteristic development that cannot be treated as adulthood. This change is due, above all, to the development of school attendance in the popular world, to such an extent that Ariès could say that anyone in childhood went to school. The Lasallian work is not unrelated to this modification of the behavior of adults toward children.⁵⁷⁷

Assessment by Historians of Education

In the view of historians, for De La Salle, the child was a composite of body and spirit; a being in the process of becoming, for whom it is necessary to plan with a view to eternal life after the temporal life;⁵⁷⁸ a being given specific aptitudes to develop; physically and spiritually malleable; inclined to evil, yet perfectible.

They emphasize the founder's preoccupation with the psychological aspect, with taking care to know the student in general and each student in particular, and of using this knowledge in dealing with him. Likewise, they demonstrate how this concern determined, for De La Salle, a series of adaptations, including: of the physical infrastructure of the school to children of different developmental stages; of the program to the interests and chronological stage of the students; of correction to the type of person erring; of the necessities of taking into account the abilities of the student and his pace, etc.

They cite the practical methods used in the Lasallian school for getting to know the student: attentive observation of the student by the teacher; detailed correction of the students' academic tasks; and various catalogs, with the register of pertinent data about his person and academic work.

Concerning the usefulness of the Registers kept, the authors observe that they allowed for immediate information on each student, making him an individual and keeping his history. However, regarding its function, for some, they were instruments of power and consequently of disciplinary action, and for others, in supporting the teacher's knowledge of the students, helped the teacher to discover ways to help them effectively. Prairat asserted that, thanks, above all, to the Registers, the *Conduct* "offers us an interesting and detailed typology, clearly demonstrating that the school population was not perceived in a confused or undifferentiated way."⁵⁷⁹ In Gaston's judgment, with the Registers, there existed in De La Salle, "an effort at individual psychology."⁵⁸⁰

Others, through the directions given and the practical measures implemented through attention to each student, their studies and attendance, connect De La Salle to psychology and differentiated pedagogy.⁵⁸¹ Some make larger claims: Watson said that De La Salle was "the author of a pedagogical psychology,"⁵⁸² and Peters and Cooman obviously exaggerated in proclaiming him, simply, an "eminent psychologist."⁵⁸³

Education Connected to Life

6

Pedagogical Realism

De La Salle spent most of his life in the 17th century, known in the history of education, as the century of “Pedagogical Realism.” Underlying this movement were important **scientific advancements** and the thinking principally of two **philosophers**: Francis Bacon and René Descartes.

The **scientific advances** consisted of new formulations (such as Kepler’s universal laws), new creations (such as analytic geometry, by Descartes, and the calculation of probabilities, by Pascal), and new discoveries (such as infinite calculus, by Leibniz, the law of universal attraction, by Newton, and the principle of the gas engine, by Papin, and systemic circulation, by Harvey, the lymphatic system, by Pecquet, etc.). Such advances were possible thanks to the appearance of new instruments (the astronomical telescope, microscope, barometer, thermometer, pendulum, calculator, etc.); new institutions (the Paris Observatory, the French Academy of Science, the King’s Garden, etc.) and new publications (*Journal des Savants*). For **Bacon**, author of *Novum Organum*, the source of knowledge was nature (empiricism) and the way to achieve it was through observation (the experimental method). René **Descartes**, author of *Discourse on Method*, affirmed that the ultimate source of knowledge was reason and set the rules for seeking certainty, that is, evidence, analysis, synthesis and corroboration.

Pedagogical realism contrasted itself to humanism, already in decline, that is, in its formalist and memorial phase. More specifically, realism sought preparation for life, rather than aesthetic and literary formation. In the place of the cultivation of memory and imitation, it advocated for the development of a spirit of inquiry and a capacity for judgment. Rather than referring to ancient books, tradition, authority, it called for the production of science from nature and reason. In place of the importance of verbal skills, it defended the learning of the “real” sciences (*res* = thing), of natural phenomena, of social realities and vernacular languages. In place of the wordiness of the humanist teachers, accused, by some, of verbal pedantism, syllogistic deductions and tired teaching routines, it presented experimentation, induction and deduction, new science, understood as the investigation of the methods most effective in teaching practice.

Among the protagonists of pedagogical realism were Ratke, the first to use the term “didactic” and sketch its outline; Comenius, author of *Didactica Magna* and creator of vast educational works and extensive pedagogical doctrine, who, among other things, demanded the use in teaching of manipulable objects and, when that was not possible, at least their visualization by pictorial representations; Francke, a pietist, who taught according to the ideas of Comenius and wanted a culture related to life and concerned with the formation of the teacher, creating, in 1697, a school for teachers; and John Locke, the educator of English “gentlemen” who included as an important element in his educational thinking the thesis that what is taught should be useful to the student’s future life.

Along these same lines one finds, in France, Abbott Fleury, who, in the preface of his *Treatise on the Choice and Method of Studies*, made a harsh critique of the secondary teaching of his time, pointing out what, for him, was its major failing: the fact that it did not prepare the young student for life according to the new necessities and emerging needs.

Lasallian Realism

De La Salle agreed with various realist theorists and educators (Ratke, Locke, Comenius) when they gave precedence to the vernacular language over Latin, the discipline that formed the third element of the traditional educational tripod; with Ratke, for his methodological work; with Comenius, for his defense of education for all and for the rigorous sequential organization of the academic subject matter; with Francke, in the creation of a seminary for teachers, ten years before the one opened by the German pedagogue;⁵⁸⁴ with Locke, and also with Fleury, in advocating for useful teaching for the children of the poor; and again, with Locke, on the importance that he gave to the first impressions made on this *tabula rasa* which for De La Salle was also the child's spirit.

De La Salle noticed the fact that children were malleable and susceptible and that impressions were made on them more easily and deeply and that their mark lasted longer. He observed this in figures such as Saint Teresa, Saint Hilary and Saint Marcel, who took in with their mother's milk the guidance for the good and for the practices of the Christian life. He also saw it in the children abandoned on their own who developed habitual vices that were later difficult to uproot.⁵⁸⁵ As a result of this recognized reality and psychological and pastoral conviction, he directed the zeal of his teachers more to work with children than with adolescents.

Despite the connections and coincidences that can be pointed out, there are no proven signs that De La Salle had contact either with the people or with the referenced writings promoting the new education according to the modern spirit, or with those who gave that education its scientific and philosophical grounding. Descartes died a year before De La Salle was born. In 1663, his works were included on the list of forbidden books that Catholics were not to read. In 1671, the year in which De La Salle was a student at the Sorbonne, the universities and colleges were prohibited from teaching the views of the author of *Discourse on Method*. Two of De La Salle's teachers at the university – Guillaume de Lestocq and Jacques Desperiers – were known for their profound aversion to Cartesianism. Locke made various trips to Paris, including while De La Salle lived there. Some of his works were translated into French, such as his *Essay on Human Understanding*, in 1700. But Descartes and Locke were philosophers, and for someone like De La Salle for whom things should be seen only in the light of faith and not by the eyes of flesh, or nature, or reason,⁵⁸⁶ it was necessary to mistrust philosophers, who preferred reason and human motivations over faith.⁵⁸⁷

Beyond this, as orthodox as De La Salle was, it is difficult to think of a priest deeply faithful to Rome perusing texts included on the *Index*, such as Descartes, or browsing the pages of a fervent friend of tolerance, such as Locke, or of a defender of the Reformation, a pastor of the Moravian Brotherhood, such as Comenius. All of that, however, did not keep De La Salle from having decidedly realist streaks. It appears that he was a realist more **by nature** and **by vocation** than by the influences of his time.

By nature, he was essentially a practical genius, at least more practical than theoretical, more concrete than abstract. It is true that he had to, not infrequently, look for arguments on which to base his points of view, but, in those cases, he was often inspired by his own practice and that of others. One of the basic motivations that directed his life was life itself, the reality that it involved and to which he was attentive.

Following his genius and continuing the experience from his time in seminary, in which pastoral practice was deemed more important than speculative concerns, his educational enterprises – experimented, observed, reflected on and constantly revised – did not arise from theoretical musings, the incarnation of abstract principles, but from the specific needs to be served and of the everyday student.

Different from others, De La Salle neither thought nor wrote about education before becoming involved in it. When circumstances committed him to education and to the teachers, it is true that, to be able to advise and direct them, he looked for inspiration in the writings of others, such as the *The Parish School*, and in other places and institutions.⁵⁸⁸ However, the choices he made, the practices he adopted, and the prescriptions he formulated and founded were essentially the results of a lived and shared experience. Thus, the observed reality of the ineffective schools and poorly formed teachers left largely to their own devices was basic in instigating the beginning of his interest in them, and the good results seen as a result of his intervention were decisive in bringing the teachers ever closer to him, which brought him to live with them and ended with him living like them.

In the years 1690-1691, it was the testimony of the reality of De La Salle's enterprise, barely struggling along and at the point of being extinguished, that brought this solution finder to create a set of measures capable of making his Institute grow from within before taking on commitments and extending itself throughout France. It was later, when he became aware of the adverse conditions in which his teachers in Rouen lived and of the detrimental consequences that befell them, that he opted to work exclusively in schools and with men entirely dedicated to that ministry.

When, in a given moment, the founder had to create a document to defend the use of the Brothers' identifying habit, a habit different from the one worn by ecclesiastics and from secular lay people, yes, he argued, but with facts. He said that the entire habit was the result of experience. He spoke of the hardship of both changing the outfit as well as of adopting ecclesiastical vestments, and of the advantages and good effects of adopting the habit that the Brothers wore, which had shown itself to be appropriate, useful and convenient. In favor of his position, he recalled the experience (not the teaching) of others who practiced communal life, such as the Jesuits, Saint Vincent de Paul, the Lazarists, and others. He cited the fact that the habit that the Brothers had been using, without problems, for five years in various cities and two years in Paris; and he closed his argument by pointing to what had happened, in practice, before and after adopting the referenced clothing.

The same was true of the memorandum that De La Salle prepared to convince his friend, Bishop Godet of Marais, of the suitability of teaching the poor to read first in French. In those pages, De La Salle wielded entirely practical arguments. French was easier for the children, because they understood it. Those who did not understand Latin, when they read it, inspired pity on the part of those who did. It took much less time to learn to read in French than in Latin. Not knowing the meaning of the words made it difficult to be interested in learning reading. In his experience, students did not attend school long enough to learn to read both languages well, such that, beginning with Latin, they would leave school without learning to read either one. Finally, leaving school able to read French, the student would be able to teach himself Christian doctrine outside of school, studying published catechisms, and would have an additional way of keeping Sundays and feast days holy: reading good books in the vernacular.

It is true that, according to what is said in the preface, everything written in the *Conduct* was the fruit of "a great number of dialogues." But, in it, it said that these conversations took place between the founder and his "oldest" – one supposes with the most experience – followers and those who had shown themselves to be the best teachers, "the most successful in teaching," not between De La Salle and the Brothers who were still studying. To this it added explicitly that this teaching-administrative manual resulted from "the experience of many years" and that it addressed things not only "well thought out" but also "well tested, proven." The *Conduct* is a monument to practical experience, erected by men who question and update what they do.⁵⁸⁹ In his quest, De La Salle, "more than theories, listened to holy and experienced men. And among the men of experience, those who, from very early on, he gave the privilege of being his own Brothers of the Christian Schools."⁵⁹⁰

It is obvious that studying the *The Parish School*, texts such as *Meditations for Teachers* by Father Giry, and reading the Bible, with reflection on it and prayer from it, not only contributed significantly to defining aspects of the educational task and method, but were also fundamental in configuring the image and the characteristics of the teacher that De La Salle wanted for his schools. However, just as experience was the essential basis of the Lasallian teacher's educational practice, likewise the definition of the teacher's personal qualities were not the product purely of reflection or prayer, or of pre-established categories. They, too, were discovered in large part experimentally through careful reflection on observation of the educator's ways of being that resulted or did not result in more effective educational activity.

When the *Conduct* of 1720 laid the foundation for the balance to be held in the relationship between the teacher and the student, one of its foundations was in looking to the saints, in what they taught, but also in their lives:

Experience founded on the unvarying teachings of the saints and the examples which they have set us affords sufficient proof that to perfect those who are committed to our care, we must act toward them in a manner at the same time both gentle and firm.⁵⁹¹

We would say that, beyond being a realist by nature, De La Salle was also a realist by **vocation**. In addition to having practical sense (that is, good sense), from his youth he felt called to do good. In other words, he was animated by an apostolic zeal, one of the characteristic marks that he left on his followers. This zeal propelled him to find effective responses to the educational needs that he encountered, luckily of the world of children and youth [of the “popular classes”] that has benefited from his responses.

Beginning from Life and Preparing for Life

De La Salle undertook a twofold search for effective solutions to the needs of children and youth: **taking their lives as a starting point** and **preparing them for life** in general and specifically for the **Christian, civic, and professional** life. Undertaking this preparation with a **practical methodology** and through the work of **teachers** who were also **practically formed**.

Beginning from Life

Lasallian pedagogy was rooted in life. Once again, the works De La Salle was involved with were not the fruit of theoretical ponderings undertaken in an office. And, repeating again, in his Institute, the education given was “a suitable education,”⁵⁹² that is, that responded to their reality [these young people] and brought an educational and pastoral solution to their needs. Thus, for the generally neglected children he created the Christian School and codified, in the *Conduct*, an entire practice developed to establish an institution of teaching made to measure for them. In meeting students who worked during the week, he created the Sunday School and its adapted program. For the candidates for becoming a Brother, he created the novitiate, in order to prepare them spiritually and pedagogically. For the candidates to be lay teachers, he offered the Seminary for Teachers of the Interior, with the goal of them being able to respond to the cares and concerns of the rural population of the time and to exercise the functions as teacher as auxiliary to the pastor in service of that population. For the needs of the children of the exiled Irish aristocracy, who had to learn to communicate, to be part of society and to live in a totally different country, he responded with the creation of a boarding school tailored to their needs. In Calais, he also agreed to lead schools with the qualities necessary for preparing the children of the inhabitants of a port city. In Alais and Les Vans, he agreed to be part of taking Catholic doctrine to the Calvinist children through the school, after the Edict of Nantes was rescinded. At Saint Yon, he extended his pedagogical creativity, opening a paid boarding school, a type of post-primary school, for the children of the petty bourgeoisie, the tradesmen and the “industrialists” who neither needed nor wanted classical culture but rather, introduction to the sciences and arts that were practical to life, a boarding school that was one of the seeds of what came to be called modern secondary education. Thus ends the array of institutions of which he took charge or created to serve every kind of educational need, establishing the material, psychological and spiritual conditions for the correction of difficult youths and even the recuperation of delinquents.

Preparing for Life

Life in General

De La Salle’s school not only took life as its starting point, trying to respond educationally to the appeals that arose from it. It also tried to prepare for life. This is expressed in the *Common Rules* which, in speaking of the Institute’s purpose, said that the Christian School would “give them a suitable education,”⁵⁹³ as seen earlier when addressing the various forms by which De La Salle expressed the idea of integral education.

In several texts, De La Salle called to mind that Jesus Christ came into the world so that all might have life and have it abundantly.⁵⁹⁴ He invited his teachers, as ministers, representatives and the continuation of the Redeemer, to take Christ’s purpose as their own: to allow their students to live abundantly.

He knew that the children he educated came from a pre-determined world and would return to it to live in it. He respected the stability of that material and temporal world and was very aware that the eternal salvation of the students for which his school worked, however primary the transcendent dimension might be, also demanded that the school have an earthly goal, a temporal end. He saw that treating the students as heirs to the Kingdom called for and even required preparing them to be a useful part of human society.

What De La Salle wrote regarding penances that could be applied to everything to be required of the Lasallian student: “Nothing ... that is useless should ever be given as a penance.”⁵⁹⁵

Adopting usefulness to the life of the poor as one of the determining criteria for his pedagogical choices seemed especially necessary to him, given the brief amount of time the poor student would attend school, as he himself recorded in his *Memorandum on the French Language*.⁵⁹⁶

In more concrete terms if, for example, during the enrollment process parents were asked for information about the student (if he were already in a school and had left, and why; the physical condition and intellectual and moral qualities, etc.), one of the obvious reasons was so that the teachers might know what might be most profitable for the new candidate to the Lasallian school.

Among the various things given to students as awards, “the most commonly distributed” were sentences written in large letters. Why? Among other reasons, “because they will ordinarily be the most useful.”⁵⁹⁷

This criterion also applied to the selection of subjects in the school. The Christian Schools did not teach just anything and the Lasallian lessons were neither random, nor made fancy for the students, so that they sparked. What was taught had to serve the life of the poor.⁵⁹⁸

At the upper reading level, level nine, they read registers and specific types of documents, because “it is very useful to have the students learn” to read them.⁵⁹⁹ In handwriting, the student did not only learn to write elegantly, but also the practical task of how to trim the quills used in that art. In spelling and writing, in the eighth level of round writing they learned by copying practical things that would serve the student in their civic and professional life.⁶⁰⁰ Transcribing these texts was worth the effort even though some of them were repetitive or even precisely because they were repetitive, signaling both deep-rooted conviction and practical habit:

The manner of teaching them spelling will be to have them copy letters written by hand. They will copy especially such things as it may be useful for them to know how to write and of which they might later have need, such as notes of hand, receipts, agreements with workers, legal contracts, bonds, powers of attorney, leases, deeds, and official reports. This is done so that they may impress these things on their memories and learn to write similar ones.⁶⁰¹

For those who were in the eighth level of round writing,

In the morning, they should copy something out of some good book; in the afternoon, they should copy handwritten material. After three months at this level, they shall themselves on the two days each week when writing and spelling are taught, write in legible, correctly spelled hand writing letters of their own, promissory notes, receipts, leases, workers’ contracts, and other documents which might subsequently be useful.⁶⁰²

In arithmetic they also worked with elements that would later be useful in life: drafting invoices and, depending on the level, notions of surveying, measuring practices, etc.

Christian Life

The life for which the Lasallian school prepared its students was, first and foremost, that of the true Christian, the faithful of (and faithful to) Christ, of an active member of the Church, of a living stone in the Body of Christ.

In Chapter 4 [of the *Conduct*] on “Christian education,” it was shown how the Lasallian school formed the Christian, helping him to learn, to develop the spirit and motivations of the Christian nature and to begin a Christian ethical-moral life, a life of piety. It also spoke of some measures that the school took in that regard: the catechism, reflection, examination of conscience, reading, pastoral character of the school as a whole and the presence and action of the Christian teacher.

Regarding catechism and the Lasallian catechisms, an illustrative example [presents itself] of what referred to formation for the Christian life: It is generally admitted that the text of the *Duties of a Christian* in questions and responses, written by De La Salle, was intended for students. It is known that in this work, in studying the sacrament of matrimony, they did not learn just the duties of children to their parents, but also the obligations of parents to their children.⁶⁰³ It is easy to imagine that this second piece of information did not fail to be a way to prepare the students themselves for the future exercise of Christian parenthood.

It seems reasonable to say that, even though De La Salle never formulated his thought in this way, concerning various human dimensions he wanted his classrooms to be schools preparing for life and schools beginning from life, which included, from the Christian point of view, having his students adopt a way of life, internally, that the “practical truths” that the catechism was teaching them.

Civic Life

In a frequently cited passage from the *Meditations*, De La Salle said that the teachers, just as they should prepare the true Christian for the Church, they should also form a good citizen for the State. He added that they would “procure the good of the nation by teaching them how to read and write and everything else that pertains to your ministry with regard to exterior things,” that is, secular reality.⁶⁰⁴

“Reading” would allow the student to know and understand the world and the society in which and for which they were prepared and to situate themselves within it more consciously. Since basic reading was learned in the mother language, they would develop a French culture, different from that which Greek and Latin taught at the colleges – another civic factor. “Reading and writing” would allow them to be valuable instruments in sending and receiving messages, communicating, establishing rich and enriching relationships in their context and circle of relationships. “Everything . . . with regard to exterior things” referred, among other things, to the teaching of good manners. The art of knowing how to live in the social milieu.

It is known that the curriculum at Lasallian schools did not, like other elementary schools of the time, include the history of various civilizations in its program. Poutet and Pungier made an interesting observation on this point: De La Salle, “rather than teaching what civilizations are, preferred to habituate the children to living as civilized people.”⁶⁰⁵

Professional Life

Summarizing the position of people vis-à-vis work in De La Salle’s century, Fiévet taught that at that time, “the title of ‘man’ was no longer denied to someone who was entirely subject to the necessity of working to survive, but there were still strong traces of the earlier mentality cultivated about him.”⁶⁰⁶ On the one hand, Thomas Aquinas’ point of view persisted, for whom “work is a duty for those who have no other means of living. It is a type of desperate last resort to resolve the problem of survival.”⁶⁰⁷

Added to this was the fact that, from the theological point of view, work continued to be seen by spiritualists of the era as a punishment, or sacrifice or suffering, and as a penance. The idea of work as sacrifice was implicit in the meanings that dictionaries of the time gave this word, and to the verb, to work, as in Richelet: Work (n): pain, toil. Work (v): to torture, afflict.

De La Salle, a man of his century, used such terms in this sense. Speaking of Jesus Christ, he said that “from all over Judea and also from Syria, people brought him those who suffered from various maladies and cruel afflictions.”⁶⁰⁸ In the same way, the creator of the Christian Schools, who worked not a little, also considered that activity as penance: “It was sin that obliged us to work in order to live . . . and manual labor should be accepted in a spirit of penitence . . . Ask God for the grace to take up our labor in a spirit of penance and to keep us from sin during the time we are working.”⁶⁰⁹

On the other hand, the idea of the artisanal occupation as “a necessity for the humble classes to have the minimum necessary to live, [according to] the biblical concept of punishment,” and gradually “began to be considered by the bourgeoisie – not the nobility – as a mercantile (commercial, trade) value, and soon was seen to be as valuable as that of inheritance, of business or of war.”⁶¹⁰

At the lowest tier of the bourgeoisie – including the Third Estate – many were unemployed or beggars. Out of a total of 20 million inhabitants, they numbered 2 million (in Paris alone, out of 500,000 inhabitants, they were

10,000). In these circumstances, teaching “good living” was important in helping them think of the future, which, dealing with the poor, meant above all helping them prepare for being able to work.

And who took care of this access to work and the preparation for it?

In what is today called the primary sector, the parents themselves took charge of preparing their child for agricultural and livestock work. In the secondary sector, the trade guilds – societies – took care of training the apprentices. They did not, therefore, demand of either the Charity Schools or the Little Schools any direct preparation of students for manual or technical work. The same, however, did not happen with businesses in the tertiary sector. Public administration as well as businesses needed an ever greater number of writers. Schools, theoretically, could form such functionaries, insofar as they offered the lessons that they needed. However, many Charity Schools and Little Schools did not prepare them for that work, not infrequently limiting themselves to teaching reading and catechism. The ones that taught them better were the schools of the Writing Masters.

The Lasallian school was not content with the desiccated subject matter of many of the Charity Schools and Little Schools. De La Salle was interested, moreover, in the future in terms of work, in his student’s professional qualification. He thought not only of the student’s living and getting along in the world and society; he was equally concerned with his survival, his productive insertion into and activity within the world and society. He did not just want to make his student a Christian; he wanted him to be a useful Christian in the “secular world”⁶¹¹: “It can be said that the word work is one of the key terms in De La Salle’s pedagogy; that it is indeed central to that pedagogy.”⁶¹²

De La Salle asserted – as has been seen more than once – that one of the “most dire consequences” of abandoning the young children of the artisans and the poor to their own devices was that, after years of idleness, they would later have “great difficulty in working.” He hoped that these children, taken to school and being always busy there, would find themselves able to be employed in work, when their parents so desired.⁶¹³

As already shown, the Lasallian concern for what is today called employability was demonstrated from the time of enrollment for older students, through the question about what the parents “want to do with him” in the future.⁶¹⁴ Likewise, as is well-known, De La Salle’s argument for the artisans and poor people to send their children to study, making them attend school regularly and not being hasty in withdrawing them from school, had at its base the fact that learning to read and to write would prepare them for good employment at a job.⁶¹⁵

At the practical level, with its adapted secular curriculum – reading, writing and arithmetic – the Lasallian school did not prepare for clerical or classical studies. In other words, as Everett wrote, De La Salle “did not develop teaching [as] preparatory for more study but, indeed, teaching [as] preparatory for work.”⁶¹⁶ In the early years,

he offered a “terminal” program that prepared poor students to undertake work and for life. When the parents asked for a longer academic program for their children, the studies dealt with learning a trade or general knowledge and not with preparation for higher studies.

That is what happened at the boarding school at Saint Yon, with its curriculum of the modern higher primary school in service particularly to the sons of tradesmen. The Sunday School also carried a professional stamp, because it included in its program technical design, an additional aid to employment for those who studied it, and had a professional result, seeing that De La Salle’s biographer stated that this instance of teaching was a means of “transmitting” to unemployed youths on Sundays “a taste of the trades and the incentive for work, as well as to draw them away from their disinterest and backwardness, and give them the ability to progress and establish themselves in the world.”⁶¹⁷

At least two Lasallian ministries – the novitiate for Brothers and the Seminary for Teachers of the Interior for the laity – were explicitly professionalizing in the full sense of the word, because they guaranteed theoretical bases, psychological disposition and practical training for the profession of teaching.

The Christian School in itself, the elementary Lasallian course for the children of the artisans and the poor, technically speaking, did not offer qualifications for a particular job; it did not turn the student into a professional apprentice, as the trade guilds did. They did, however, contribute to preparing them for work in a broad sense.

Initially, beginning with basic knowledge – reading, arithmetic, writing correctly and with art (spelling and calligraphy), which were useful skills in any profession and at any time – put the student in a position to be “capable of anything”⁶¹⁸ in the reality of the times. Thus, Lauraire observed that, possessing these skills,

the students of the time could become competent at valuable work, in that acquiring skills of reading, writing and arithmetic was still quite rare in France in that era (with 79% illiterate). Such that those who achieved those abilities were privileged.⁶¹⁹

Later, if the Lasallian primary school did not prepare the professional in the strict sense, the student who had studied there, with the acquisition of these basic skills, added to what he learned in spelling (drafting work contracts, budgets, invoices, receipts, etc.), was in a better position than any other child or youth to be apprenticed to a trade guild and acquire with perfection and speed the professional secrets taught there.

This all refers to the activities of the secondary sector (artisan, manufacturing, incipient industrial work). Likewise, students who had completed the elementary Lasallian course would be ready to undertake the “offices *de plume*”⁶²⁰ or other “offices,” that is public work of the tertiary sector. This included the professionals who were calligraphers:

learning to write and numbers was considered, in this era, to be an apprenticeship to a profession. In effect, the “Writing Masters” constituted a guild. They were not primarily teachers. Far from this. They were calligraphy professionals (public writers) and counters.⁶²¹

Beyond this, it is necessary to keep in mind that, in carrying out a job, it was not just a question of *what* one did. Equally important were the *ways* of being and of doing things. There were dispositions, attitudes, habits and abilities that were expected for employment in any activity and valued in any worker, regardless of the work he did or the specific profession to which he dedicated himself. For example, the enjoyment and habit of serious work done well, concentration in carrying it out, discipline of life, capacity for planning, making good use of available time, persistence in undertakings, keeping an orderly work space, the capacity to work independently, etc. In current terms, one speaks of the transfer of knowledge from academic habits to the professional area. In this sense, there remains no doubt that the Christian School also constituted preparation for carrying out a job in the full sense.

Finally, there were “offices” (jobs) carried out by students in the classroom. Their practice, along with other purposes, could not fail to be a chance to develop conscientiousness and to train the practice of work done responsibly and with pride.

Practical Methodology

The practical dimension also shows itself in the way the creators of the Lasallian school made it to function. In it, the preparation of the human person in general and of the Christian, citizen and professional in particular, did not happen solely through the subjects taught, the experiences lived, the exercises completed, or the dispositions and habits developed; it also happened through the way in which the teaching and learning process was carried out.

Lasallian teaching was practical. The *Conduct* was not a book of doctrine. It was a description – with normative force – of the organization, the functioning and the methodology by which the Lasallian schools would function well. Its first part – “School Practices and the Manner in Which They Are to Be Carried Out” – began with “Entering School and Beginning School” and ended with “Dismissal of School.” The second dealt with “Means of Establishing and Maintaining Order in the Schools.” In both, the theoretical considerations were minimal. Accepting the chapter on corrections as an exception, not inserted until the edition printed in 1720, the only

theoretical elements found were normally explanations accompanying and reinforcing specified practices such that their nature and the form of carrying them out might be better understood.

“Lasallian establishments were, first and foremost, schools of work.”⁶²² In them, the student was given constant activity: reading, writing, doing calculations, studying the catechism, asking and responding to questions, carrying out an office, praying, singing, etc.

Even in the half hour before the teacher arrived in the room, “the class was a beehive that buzzed, but in a low voice.”⁶²³ Two by two, the students recited lessons to one another. A more advanced colleague pointed with a pointer first to letters, then to syllables on the posters on the wall. In the place of the teacher, acting as a teacher, he had the more capable students read them and the less capable repeat.

To describe this environment and way of working, Morales employed the same image used by Poutet: “Seen as a whole, the classroom of De La Salle’s Christian School should seem like a swarm of perpetual activity, but with an impressive organization, order and silence.”⁶²⁴

It could almost be said that the Lasallian school was a “New [active] School,” before that term was coined. Many years before Dewey, as with many others, the Lasallian school had elements of “active learning.” In it, students learned to read by reading, to write by writing, to perform calculations by calculating. Brotherhood, as will be seen, was exercised in practice, through the “offices” such as the First Student in the Bench, Visitor of the Absent Students (and sick) and Almoner. The student who learned to attend Mass did not “study” what he should say or do during the Eucharistic celebration, he trained for it, saying and doing what he could, along with another student who would at times do the priest’s actions.⁶²⁵

And how can the varied activity that developed in this school be characterized? In the first place, it included, not infrequently, self-activity of the student. In the *Conduct* the educator is not simply the provider and supervisor of the student’s work, but the provocateur, the activator of his creative initiative. He stimulated persevering discovery and personal effort. Maximin, commenting on passages of the *Conduct*,⁶²⁶ stated that, according to De La Salle, the teacher should take particular care not to help the students

overcome very easily the difficulties they encounter in solving a problem. To the contrary, it is necessary to encourage them not to become discouraged and to find what they know so that they can think for themselves. He should convince them that they will better retain the knowledge that they have acquired through constant personal effort. To achieve serious practical results in this arena, the teacher cannot be content stating the problems they need to solve. They will have to invent others according to their ability.⁶²⁷

In the second place, the activity developed in De La Salle’s school was less a miniaturized version of activity in the style of university or college and more like an apprenticeship (in reading, in writing, in arithmetic, in shared responsibilities, in Christian civility, etc.). More than a sanctuary of study, explanations and thoughts by the teacher, it is a place of training for the student. In it, the learner is less a student than an apprentice and the instructor, less a teacher who explains and more of a guide who “shows”⁶²⁸ how to do something.

For a number of authors, this Lasallian school brings to mind less a school and more an office of the trade guilds of the Middle Ages. Lauraire, for example, states:

In the school, the student found himself in a situation similar to an apprentice who, in the various trades, was placed as a follower of a companion or teacher, to learn through contact with him.⁶²⁹

This specialist on the *Conduct* completed his assessment, observing how, similar to the rigorous method used in the guild shops, a well-defined sequence of steps was followed in De La Salle’s school: setting of a model to be, for example, reproduced in handwriting or copied in spelling; imitation of that model by the student; assimilation or intelligent internalization of the model through a calculated series of exercises; creation of habits or mechanisms by which what has been learned becomes a natural reflex; and assessment of what has been acquired, of the resulting product.

A few examples serve as illustration. The first refers to writing:

To make all sorts of students acquire freedom and ease of movement, teachers will show them how to pass properly from one letter to another, such as from an *i* to an *f*, from a *c* to an *l*, and from an *o* to an *i*, without interruption and without raising the pen. To correct the mistakes which the students may have made in all things pertaining both to boldness and to ease of movement, a teacher will demonstrate what the students must do in order to correct themselves. Then, the students are to imitate what the teacher has just done and correct what they had previously done badly.⁶³⁰

The second example addresses the preparation of pens:

In order to make the students understand, retain, and practice all that pertains to the proper way of trimming pens, teachers will themselves demonstrate trimming on three successive days. They will make students understand all that they do in trimming and why. Immediately afterward, teachers will have the students trim a pen, telling them all that they must do and how to do it well, and correcting them when they fail in anything. This lesson will continue for about a week.⁶³¹

To all this should be added still other practical approaches, for example, in mathematics, the manipulation by students of chips and coins.

Practical Formation of Teachers

Finally, the sense and hallmark of practicality were also present in the preparation of the Lasallian teacher. The novitiate for the Brothers and the Seminary for the Teachers of the Interior were not centers of theoretical instruction, but of lived experience of the adopted principles, including practice in school of the applications of what they had learned. At the beginning of communal life, this practical formation, in the case of the Brothers, took place under the “formator of new teachers” (that is, the student-teaching supervisor, in current language). Afterward, it continued in practical forms, such as the “formation catechism.”⁶³²

Results

History shows that the fact that the Lasallian schools adapted themselves to the needs of the era, especially the needs of the poor, and that they responded appropriately to these needs and prepared to face them, was one of the fundamental causes of their effect and success, as well of the large clientele they attracted through the reputation for success they warranted.

Assessment by Historians of Education

Many historians of education recognize the essentially practical genius of De La Salle. Some more than others also observe the fact that Lasallian education began from life and prepared for life.

Six authors in particular refer to this fact. The first is Petitot. He affirmed that the society created by De La Salle had as one of its points of reference “economically useful instruction.”⁶³³ Furet and Ozouf said that De La Salle gave precedence to learning French over Latin because French was a “socially useful” language.⁶³⁴ Regarding this, it is interesting to note that Groperrin thought that, to explain the Lasallian preference for French, it was not necessary to turn to the quarrel at that time between the “ancients and the moderns.” For him, what made De La Salle prefer the mother language to Latin for beginning readers was not a conviction about the excellence of the French language as a means of expression and of art,⁶³⁵ but his desire to respond to the stated goal of teaching: of the artisans, the workers, the shopkeepers in towns, who aspired to their sons being able to use, in daily

life, in professional activity, that which they learned in school. “De La Salle wanted a utilitarian teaching, teaching that implied, naturally, the priority of French.”⁶³⁶

Furet and Ozouf observed, moreover, that the Christian Schools of John Baptist de La Salle had a

decidedly charitable purpose: to try to teach the poor of the cities, frequently sent to the mediocre Charity Schools that languished according to the inclination of the good will of the Committees for the Poor and which, often, taught only very elementary reading. But the instrument born of the late offspring of the French Counter-Reformation (which the Lasallian school is) was fully modern: so modern that it escaped, in part, its religious and charitable purpose to appear, frequently, to the eyes of the leaders of the bourgeoisie as a model of the useful school.⁶³⁷

For this reason, it was accepted and sought after by this new social category as a school for their children.

Beyond this, these same authors recall the success achieved by the Christian School was not due to chance. They affirm that such success “illustrates the pressure and the evolution of the social demand of the time for a school that was better organized, more effective and socially useful.”⁶³⁸

The fourth author who addresses this theme is Manacorda. He called attention to the passage of the *Conduct* where it prescribed that “the way of teaching [students] spelling will be to have them copy texts handwritten by the students themselves, especially things the learning of which will be useful to them and that they might need in the future,” and where it directed the teacher to then have the students themselves compile similar texts. “In this way,” Manacorda commented, “under the ancient title of spelling, is hidden the most modern act of this school.”⁶³⁹ At the same time, after having examined, for the composition of his *History of Education*, many teaching manuals used throughout that time, he observed that the details of the *Conduct’s* directions regarding writing constituted “a model of artisanal learning that we find neither in the ancient documents, nor in the statutes of the medieval guilds of arts and trades.”⁶⁴⁰

Cubberley acknowledged, particularly, the practical way in which De La Salle prepared his teachers: “He understood the necessity, for the children, of well-trained teachers, preferable to erudite teachers.”⁶⁴¹

Finally, Léon pointed to the important presence of De La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools in establishing the path for technical teaching from the fundamental course: If at the higher level, in the *Ancien Régime*, “the manufacturers, the army and the navy demanded the creation of the great schools” for the formation of technical schooling,

the principle creations in material for technical education at the elementary level depended [...] on private initiatives. The work of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, a congregation founded in 1680, by De La Salle, should, on this point, claim our attention.⁶⁴²

Effective and Efficient Education⁶⁴³

7

De La Salle: Effective and Efficient

The first thing to be said on the topic is that De La Salle was a man who desired and sought effectiveness and efficiency. In his writings, he returned numerous times to expressions such as being useful, being provident, bearing fruit, etc., expressions that speak of his intention and pursuit of effectiveness in the undertaking, independently from addressing the **spiritual life, economic matters, or the pedagogical task.**

In the **spiritual life**, he alerted his followers against possible withering and reminded them of the calling to be fruitful in the religious world. In the meditation he wrote for the feast of Saint Anne, he cautioned:

take care not to remain in a sterility that can rob you of a taste for prayer and an attraction for God. See that your days are full, as Holy Scripture says, by practicing good works of the kind God asks of you in your profession.⁶⁴⁴

Likewise, in the meditation on Saint Joaquim, the husband of Saint Anne, he recalled for them that they were “destined by God to produce children for Jesus Christ and even to produce and engender Jesus Christ in their hearts.”⁶⁴⁵

De La Salle’s teachers, in their daily meditation, made an act which he called “*application*,” that is, projecting into concrete life that which they meditated on, taking the resolution to carry it out, a resolution that, among other characteristics, should be effective: “We must take care to perform them without fail when the occasions arise.”⁶⁴⁶ In the “recommendations” that he made before the end of his *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer*, he introduced the option, among others, of not making all the acts of the second part of the meditation, with, however, the exception of the application, which they can never fail to make:

We must remember to make resolutions or to renew those previously made, for they can be continued for several days, especially when we notice that we have not practiced them faithfully or that we still need them.⁶⁴⁷

The same demand for practical determination applied to the examination of conscience that the founder recommended his teachers make frequently, even daily. Similarly, the examination should always end with a “good resolution” and the determination of the “means for carrying it out.”⁶⁴⁸ Likewise, he assumed the presence of this requirement in the Christian spiritual life in general. When, in the *Duties of a Christian*, he taught how to prepare for receiving the sacrament of reconciliation, he reminded them that “contrition should be efficacious. It would not be real if we did not form in our heart a sincere resolution not to sin again.”⁶⁴⁹

With regard to **economic matters**, what De La Salle wrote on December 23, 1704, to Brother Gabriel Drolin is paradigmatic. For two years, De La Salle had been giving Drolin the necessary means to live, but in Rome, no school resulted. At that point, he sent the well-known letter in which he said with surprising candor and objectivity: “You know that I have already spent 400 francs on you, for which I do not yet see any results. Please see that this situation does not continue.”⁶⁵⁰

In the **educational realm**, De La Salle showed himself to be profoundly interested in the success of his schools: “Take care there to make your students learn well,” he wrote to one of his Brothers.⁶⁵¹ In having his teachers meditate on the founder of the Company of Jesus, he asked them: “Does your zeal for the poor lead you to seek ways as effective as those used by Saint Ignatius?”⁶⁵² When, at the end of the year, he helped them evaluate their way of interacting with the students, after asking them whether they gave them a good example and taught them theoretical-practical catechesis at a level appropriate to their condition and age, he told them: “All these matters of instruction ought to have often been the subject of your reflections and of your study of how to succeed with them.”⁶⁵³ The perpetual vows themselves, which he took with them in 1694, without failing to have a theological motivation, also had a functional significance and intentionality. They looked for a concrete result: guaranteeing the successful future of the educational project that they were building in association and the structures that they were creating and experimenting with to achieve that end. They wanted to assure the project and structures through the force of association, the persistence of stability, and the responsibility of obedience.

De La Salle’s biographers painted him as being happy when he saw his works achieving the results he hoped for them. Blain, for example, described him as “delighted with the fruits produced by the ‘*Christian Schools*’ of Les Vans and Alais and, as a result, sending more Brothers requested by the bishop of Alais.”⁶⁵⁴

De La Salle’s desire and quest for effectiveness were, in the first place, the fruit of his own active temperament, inherited from his father, Louis de La Salle, who was a councilor at the intermediate court of Rheims and served in the communal administration as the tax councilor.⁶⁵⁵ Even in religious life, Louis de La Salle sought to be effective. This is seen in facts such as that he agreed, twice, to be one of the administrators of the General Hospital of Rheims, that he was designated the auditor of accounts for the parish of Saint Symphorien and that his family was associated with the building commission of their parish.⁶⁵⁶

The search for effectiveness on the part of the son of Louis de La Salle, linked to his administrative bent, also originated in his apostolic soul, his faith, which led one of his biographers to say that De La Salle “thought nothing was difficult when he tried to do what was good,”⁶⁵⁷ and another to state that, if the prestigious and well paid canon of Rheims renounced his respected and advantageous position, “it was to be in a position to better serve the Church,”⁶⁵⁸ in which act, moreover, he imitated another founder of a religious order, Saint Dominic, who De La Salle himself affirmed left “the function of canon because he ‘*considered it of little use to the Church.*’”⁶⁵⁹ In the words of Sauvage and Campos, the pursuit of the Kingdom of God, the intention of placing the means of salvation within reach of the poor children, in summary, the spiritual motivation, born of his living faith, was what encouraged pedagogical creativity in De La Salle, which brought him to carry out “peacefully revolutionary audacious acts” and to care about the efficiency of teaching to the smallest details.⁶⁶⁰

To the extent that he was seeing the work of teachers more clearly through the eyes of faith, it became clear to him that the grace of being called and sent to the educational ministry corresponded to the responsibility to “bear much fruit” in its exercise, and that that fruit be harvested in a timely fashion.⁶⁶¹ To the same extent as he was becoming more knowledgeable about the reality of the poor, he was becoming ever more aware of the extent to which improving their futures depended on the school and the extent to which the situation in which they lived did not allow them to waste time in a school that was not effective.

Effectiveness and Efficiency in Education

Attract, Retain, Progress

De La Salle’s natural inclination, his apostolic zeal, his inspiration in faith and the cries for help coming to him from the reality of the children of the popular class, made him devote himself to their salvation through education, an effective education: “It was to procure this advantage for the children of the working class and of the poor that the Christian Schools were established.”⁶⁶²

To achieve this objective, the first thing that had to be done was to **attract** that clientele to the school. De La Salle tried to do so, and was successful in that endeavor, as Blain’s testimony confirmed: “He discovered the secret

of attracting the poor (to his schools).⁶⁶³ How did he do this? As already seen: through gratuity of instruction, the quality of instruction and its appropriateness to popular needs and, above all, prepared and attractive teachers.

De La Salle's desire was to improve as much as possible the number of children attracted to education and the number of schools to serve them: "He intended to populate the schools and make them flourish."⁶⁶⁴ If his Brothers succeeded in carrying out this intention, he was pleased and showed them his happiness: "I am very happy that you now have a good number of students. Be sure to look after them well."⁶⁶⁵ When this did not happen, he alerted them to the fact and encouraged them to meet the goal through all measures. To Brother Gabriel, he wrote: "[Father Ricordeau] says that you do not have as many as 30 students," and "You must try to increase the number of your students."⁶⁶⁶ And to Brother Hubert: "We must, it seems to me, pray to God ... for an increased number of classes and students."⁶⁶⁷ If he had good news in that regard, he did not fail to share it, as he did in another letter to his friend Brother Gabriel, in distant Rome: "We have just opened schools at Versailles, Boulogne-sur-Mer, and Moulins. Ask God to spread them more and more widely."⁶⁶⁸

Once the schools were opened and students attracted, De La Salle wanted to and took care that the schools be **kept open** and the students **retained**. He referred to keeping the schools open in writings such as the letter that he wrote on June 26, 1706, to Brother Clement, working in Léon: "If you know what I can do to save our Brothers' schools from ruin, please let me know, because we must take the means to sustain them."⁶⁶⁹

Likewise, he revealed his concern about retaining students, for example, in a letter directed to Brother Robert: "Take care not to reduce the number of your students by your scolding; teach them well so that they will not drop out."⁶⁷⁰

The care taken with physical punishments, the effort put into reducing them to a minimum, not rushing to use them and other precautions recommended by the *Conduct* for their correct use was also related to his interest in stabilizing the school population. In the *Conduct*, De La Salle and his followers called attention to the fact that recourse to the firmness of these punishments makes students not want to come to class.⁶⁷¹ Corrections made indiscriminately regardless of the type of student could turn some of them against their teachers, discourage them, make them not like school, and, ultimately, bring them to leave school, beyond which the disaffected students could spread their discontent and, in this way, prevent other parents from sending their children to the school.⁶⁷²

In addition to all this, De La Salle thought that, for effective learning, it was necessary, as much as possible, to try to keep the student in school for a sufficient length of time. This prompted a concrete recommendation that at first glance appears strange: do not have the young children gifted with "great intelligence and memory" move too quickly from one section to another (in Lasallian terms, from one lesson or order to the next) because in that case "they would not go to school long enough."⁶⁷³

Finally, it was not enough that students, in large numbers, attend his numerous schools for a sufficient time. It was necessary that they get some benefit from their studies, **that they progress** and have success. De La Salle insisted on this point in one of his letters: "I am very pleased that you have a large number of students. Be sure to make them progress well."⁶⁷⁴ In the *Directories* that he wrote to instruct the Brothers in their recordkeeping, he asked that all inform him every two months and the community Director weekly whether they showed zeal "in making the students' progress in reading and writing, if they were benefitting by what they were taught, or if some or several of them did not progress and for what reason."⁶⁷⁵ When the person in charge of the school was someone other than the Director of the Brothers' community, he too was to be informed, "at least twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday," among other things, "whether or not the pupils are improving."⁶⁷⁶

Morales addressed this desire for the success of each student well, stating that "for De La Salle, success was not found in that the 'better' reach the end of the road, but in that all achieve the goal, albeit at different paces and times."⁶⁷⁷

What did De La Salle do to reach all these goals? In a general sense, he wanted the school to "run well." He returned with insistence on this aspect frequently, especially in his letters: "Take care that the school always runs well."⁶⁷⁸ "Make sure that your schools do well. I will do my best to support that effort."⁶⁷⁹

In the same way as when the number of schools and students grew and he heard of their progress, he also rejoiced in hearing of the good conduct of a school and expressed his joy to those who made the good conduct

happen. In communicating with the Brothers via correspondence, he never missed an opportunity to share the joy of that good news with them: "I am very pleased that your school is doing well," he wrote, once again to Brother Robert.⁶⁸⁰ Likewise, referring to the Lasallian works in Avignon, he informed the "exile" in Rome: "The schools are doing well there."⁶⁸¹

Measures

"That the school run well." That is, in Lasallian terms, that it achieve its apostolic end of putting the student on the path to eternal salvation, preparing him as an enlightened and consistent Christian, and preparing him to live life in conditions of human dignity through the competent exercise of a profession.

But, for De La Salle, achieving these ends (that is, the existence of the school as an effective reality) required that it "run well" in its structure and functioning, that it exist as an efficient instrument. As Capelle recalled, this formula, ("that the school run well"), for De La Salle, "is not a simple longing, an empty expression. It is the result of concerted effort."⁶⁸² What work? That of creating, innovating, or transforming and, in all cases, anticipating, organizing, executing and evaluating. Here De La Salle's genius for the school entered in, the word genius understood, obviously, as a natural talent, a predisposition for something. In the case of De La Salle, the talent for putting the academic institution in motion in a creative or transformative, organized and functioning way.

Blain did not fail to see that genius, which led him to write: "No one more than De La Salle put into practice more secure, simple and effective means for educating an abandoned child in the knowledge of salvation."⁶⁸³ Anselme saw him employing in his schools "at times, quite audacious innovations."⁶⁸⁴ Blain described his transformational works, such as the poorly organized school in the parish that the pastor of Saint Sulpice entrusted to him and to which he brought "order in everything and in every part."⁶⁸⁵

De La Salle was not alone in this endeavor. His teachers added their efforts to his in their own willingness and in their quest for the conditions and practical means to guarantee the positive results of academic activity, as can be seen, for example, with those who were working in Rouen. When, at the beginning of their presence in the capital of Normandy, in light of the difficult situation in which they were living, they wrote to De La Salle laying out for him the impossibility of continuing in the current reality, they used the argument of the already cited risk to their health as well as to living the spirit of the Institute. Likewise, they were very aware of the quality of attention given to their students. In other words: with too many students in each classroom, "many children did not receive attention." The rest of the teachers' work suffered from various disadvantages: "in summary, the fruits of the school are compromised." They closed with assurances that they were willing to work with reduced wages, in order to make the schools "function fruitfully."⁶⁸⁶

In concrete terms, what measures did they, as much as De La Salle, resort to for the schools to run well? Some were of the order of **pedagogy**; others of an **administrative** nature.

Pedagogical Measures

Among the **pedagogical** measures, one can point out some of a **preventative** character, others of a **corrective** type and others with a **purposeful**, proactive sense.

The concern that students be continuously occupied with their work, for example, was **preventative**, requiring the teacher to prepare lessons in detail.

Another preventative practice that De La Salle integrated over time into the educational apparatus and that of the *Conduct* was vigilance,⁶⁸⁷ which, in Poutet's opinion, looked to "preserve children from opportunities to fail, such that they not need to be punished."⁶⁸⁸ Traditionally, and still today, the object of vigilance in the school is in particular the behavior of the student. De La Salle, in defining the goal, pointed to three things that this word rarely recalls today and that are linked to the content, the method and the environment for learning:

The vigilance of teachers in school consists particularly of three things: 1) correcting all the words which are mispronounced by a student when reading; 2) making all the other students who have the same lesson follow along when any one of them is reciting; and 3) enforcing a very strict silence. Teachers should constantly pay attention to these three things.⁶⁸⁹

The focus of vigilance on behavior was also and very strongly present, in a permanent and omnipresent way (“never leaving them [the students] out of sight”⁶⁹⁰): exercised not only in the classroom, but also outside of the classroom (for example, in going to and returning from the Church), during the liturgical offices, and even as the children made their way home.⁶⁹¹

To accomplish such vigilance, teachers were given practical advice such as positioning themselves and their students strategically, such that they not be out of view;⁶⁹² periodically raising their head;⁶⁹³ and assigning one student to pay attention, in the place of the teacher, when he could not be where the students met.⁶⁹⁴

For De La Salle, this theme was of such importance that it is one of the most frequently visited in the *Conduct*. Why was such an educational tactic important? He considered it the source of order and progress for the students. He wrote to Brother Robert (him again!), “Supervise the children carefully, for we will have no order in school except insofar as we watch over the students, which is what assures their progress.”⁶⁹⁵ He saw it as a means of correcting the students: Brother, “their improvement will be realized not by your impatience but by your vigilance and good direction.”⁶⁹⁶ In the *Common Rules*, he included this expedient amongst the means to be used by the Brothers to strive “to procure the salvation of the children confided to them.”⁶⁹⁷ It brought to mind the function of the bishop: like the bishop, they were guardians of the flock that God had entrusted to them.⁶⁹⁸

This reference to the bishop as the guardian of the flock, along with the image of the good shepherd, which De La Salle used to describe his teacher, makes it clear that, in speaking of being vigilant, he was in fact thinking of the service of watching over, that is, of being attentive, taking care, not only to protect, defend, keep something bad from happening, but also to direct, to help, and to live the values that merit and should be lived according to the Gospel. In other words, for De La Salle, being vigilant was not an act of policing, but one of the ways of expressing the teacher’s zeal. This is the reading of Lasallian vigilance of those who see not only the action but also know the intention behind it, such as Morales, for whom the practice of vigilance in Lasallian pedagogy, “is an eminently pastoral act: the exercise of educative love in search of the best environmental conditions such that the school achieve its basic goals, preventing at the same time any error.”⁶⁹⁹ Maximin wrote in the same vein: Lasallian vigilance is “control exercised out of love.”⁷⁰⁰ Poutet and Pungier recalled that it was one of the “twelve virtues of a good teacher” cited by De La Salle⁷⁰¹ and saw in it “constant attention to everything that could signify a physical or moral risk to the children. An attentive [and loving] eye,”⁷⁰² like a guardian angel, to which De La Salle compared educators in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.⁷⁰³ Lauraire and Poutet understood it as a highly pedagogical act. Lauraire, commenting on what it comprised according to the *Conduct* (correct what was read incorrectly; make everyone follow the lesson; make them be silent), said that “we see that vigilance does not have a primarily disciplinary or corrective goal, but rather is oriented toward effective work.”⁷⁰⁴ Lastly, according to Pungier, “to De La Salle the vigilance of the teachers was important. He saw it in a very practical way, therefore, for the classes to be given more effectively; it seemed to him to be an essential element of educational work.” He asked: “Why deprive the teachers of this irreplaceable resource of personal influence?”⁷⁰⁵

The **corrective** measures that De La Salle, and in particular his collaborators, turned to were corrections (by word, by physical punishment and, in extreme cases, by expulsion), and penances (such as learning something by memory, copying texts at home, etc.).

These themes, difficult for a 21st-century mentality, will be addressed in some detail in another chapter.⁷⁰⁶ Here – in characterizing Lasallian education as effective and efficient – only De La Salle’s desire that such measures used in his time and considered today anachronistic be effective will be mentioned.

For De La Salle, one of the major criteria in this question was effectiveness, that is, the usefulness arising from the use of correction. For him, the application of punishment or penance should be fruitful, producing positive effects.⁷⁰⁷

Therefore, anything that was not useful should never be given as physical punishment or penance. Before the teacher used one or the other, he should be certain that it would have the hoped-for effect, both for those receiving it as well as by the accounts they gave of it:⁷⁰⁸ the improvement, the change, the “correction” of the student. If many young students, for example, should not receive physical correction, it was precisely because it would not create beneficial conditions for them. On the other hand, if several students committed a wrongdoing, each should receive the punishment that was most likely to be most effective for him as well as for the others.

Penances should be much more common than physical punishment. Once again, what was the criterion for this directive? “They ... are much more useful.”⁷⁰⁹

Stated from the opposite perspective, administering punishment or imposing penances was not to produce bad consequences or result in negative fruits such as, for example, the irritation of the punished student or the reduplication of resistance in the timid.⁷¹⁰

The third category of measures proposed by De La Salle for effectiveness and efficiency in his schools were **proactive** or **encouraging**. Which measures were these? Guaranteeing “**whole**” students. Creating an appropriate work **environment**. Integrally **making good use of time**. Taking care in choosing **content**. Using the best **methods, techniques and resources** available. Looking for **perfection** in the work accomplished. Being serious in **promotion**. Taking care in **evaluation**. Knowing how to **motivate**. Lastly, guaranteeing good **teachers**.

In the document known as the *Memorandum on the Habit*, De La Salle expressed one of his basic convictions about the kind of teacher he envisioned: “Community observances and classroom work require their total commitment.”⁷¹¹ On a different scale, one can say that what he wanted regarding the professionalism of his teachers, he also wanted for the student. The student should also be “**whole**.” It was not enough that the student coming to his school be a pupil; he should truly be a student.

When, in 1688, De La Salle, with a few companions, began progressively to take on the complete direction of the Rue Princesse School, in the parish of Saint Sulpice in Paris, he found students dividing their time between the classroom and work in a factory, which helped keep them busy, produced extra output for the manufacturing teacher and benefited the parish. The children could, moreover, be called upon at any time by the pastor to attend baptisms, weddings or funerals. One of the changes made gradually by the new teachers was to regulate and decrease the work and the service of the altar servers in order to focus on school and on the children’s work there that was specifically directed at primary instruction. In other words, to make the students professionals at studying.

The second of the five sentences posted on the walls of Lasallian schools to constantly remind the students of their essential duties said, “You must apply yourself, in school, to studying the lesson.”⁷¹² In the *Conduct*, in listing the “five things for which corrections will be given in school,” the first of these for the student was “for not having studied.”⁷¹³

The student’s task was not interrupted even by holidays. Before the students began them, the teacher was to give them a series of recommendations, trying to make, “above all those who have more difficulty or who apply themselves less in school” understand that “during vacation at home, they should study and read frequently, and even write, if they are writing students, so that they do not forget what they have learned [during the year].”⁷¹⁴

It bears recalling that the wholeness of the Lasallian student began with the fact that he remained in the school “from morning to afternoon,” that is, for an entire block of time. This is attested to, among other places, in the *Memorandum on the Habit*; the teachers were to be in the schools “every day for three and a half hours in the morning and as long in the afternoon.”⁷¹⁵

Beyond this, what was asked of the student that he might be “whole”? In the first place, he was to attend school regularly, which was not easy for the kind of students with whom De La Salle worked. It is known that the question of absenteeism, in that era, was a true curse. The conviction about the necessity of being regular in attending school that De La Salle wanted transmitted to the parents, he first tried to instill in the teachers. To Brother Robert he addressed the following words: “See to it that your students attend regularly; this is very important.”⁷¹⁶ His teachers shared his conviction. In the *Conduct* it was clearly stated: “It is better to have fifty students who attend regularly than one hundred who are absent all the time.”⁷¹⁷

According to the logic of this conviction, in the initial interview with the people responsible for the potential student, the Director of the school made it clear to them that the guarantee of regular attendance was a condition of enrollment: “Neither shall any student be accepted who cannot come to school regularly.”⁷¹⁸

The *Conduct* goes into detail concerning the concrete circumstance that cannot be allowed as excuses for not being in class: “No student can be enrolled who is expected to miss school occasionally to stay at home and watch

over the house or the younger children,” and “little children shall not be admitted if they can come only during summertime, in good weather, or at a later hour than the others.”⁷¹⁹

Were there no exceptions? According to the *Conduct*, student illness was an excused absence. Beyond this, as will be seen in speaking of Lasallian education as open education, the possibility of a student not coming to class on feast days celebrated by the civil or religious community from which he came was allowed.

The *Conduct* along with analyzing the causes of absences suggested solutions to increase regular attendance at school.⁷²⁰ The principal solution was the presence of teachers who were attractive in their being and their action.⁷²¹ Another was to entrust the less serious students, if they were capable, with an “office” that would help keep them occupied at school and keep them there.⁷²² It spoke also of two other means which have already been mentioned, but in a different context: one, a positive encouragement, and the other, a corrective. The form of positive encouragement was to recognize students who attended regularly with awards. The corrective means consisted in linking the student’s advancement in lessons and levels not only to mastering the material, but also to a minimum requirement for attendance: those who had missed two whole days (that is, two mornings and two afternoons) without permission or five whole days, even with permission, were not advanced in lessons or level.⁷²³

In the same way, students who arrived late six times during the month were not promoted. Being a “whole” student also meant being punctual. De La Salle’s letters insisted on this: “Make the students be punctual in arriving on time.” Enrollment required it. During the enrollment process, the parents were alerted that their sons “must be present every morning at 7:30 and every afternoon at 1:00.” Along with attendance, students were constantly reminded of the obligation of being on time. The first sentence mounted on the classroom wall held this message: “You can neither be absent from class, nor arrive late without permission.”⁷²⁴

In parallel, and even before (literally) they required punctuality from their students, the teachers themselves were to be an example in carrying out their teaching activities: “You must be exact to make all exercises in class on time, because to have order there, everything must be regulated,”⁷²⁵ De La Salle wrote to those in his charge. The *Conduct* instructed the Director or Inspector of Schools to observe “that all begin the lesson and the exercises of the school day precisely at the appointed hour, without delaying a single instant.”⁷²⁶ Among the functions of the student who held the office of Bell Ringer was working with them to verify punctuality:

Care must be taken to ring the bell exactly on time. About the time for a *Miserere* before the beginning of the prayers in the morning and before catechism in the afternoon, the Bell Ringer will toll two or three strokes to notify the students to put their books away, the Collectors to gather up all papers, and all to prepare themselves and be ready to begin the prayers without a moment’s delay and as soon as the bell has ceased ringing.⁷²⁷

What if there were students whose parents were not convinced by any argument made to them about having their children be present and punctual? “It seems to me that we must dismiss students who do not attend regularly or are tardy, for to tolerate either the one or the other brings about disorder in the school.”⁷²⁸

The second proactive measure for having the school run effectively and efficiently was to have an environment advantageous for academic work to prevail in it, to establish an appropriate climate, what the *Conduct* calls order, and later came to be called school discipline.

Rigault was convinced of this and stated that De La Salle’s desire to establish order in his schools was one of his reasons for systematizing and generalizing the simultaneous mode of teaching.⁷²⁹ As noted previously, if the simultaneous mode allowed many students to receive attention at the same time, it was also required for such attention to occur in an orderly and profitable way.

In order for the desired order to hold sway, the *Conduct* also suggested the use of several very practical strategies: the placement of the students (separate them from one another, according to the size and arrangement of space available; seat disruptive students near the teacher, or between two quiet students who normally behaved well; place a talkative student between two silent and attentive students; place a student of poor morals either by himself or between two students whose correct living was certain, etc.), the highly criticized – by one author in particular – physical discipline, expressed in the *Conduct* by gestures, such as crossing the arms, or by measures such as keeping hands and eyes busy with holding and reading a book, etc.⁷³⁰

Another measure was the rigorous and detailed regulation and prescription of what should be done in the school and the way everything should be done. The daily schedules were prescribed in minute detail and following them created a rhythm that avoided the ups and downs and unpredictability of improvisation. If there were an exception, its conditions were defined. A student, for example, could enter the classroom late, but only until a designated time.

The abilities to be mastered at each level and sublevel were defined with precision. In the case of reading, for example, “the intermediate level will consist of those who make few mistakes in this reading, that is to say, one or two mistakes at most each time.”⁷³¹

The times devoted to activities were calculated and set. There was a single direction on how to spend feast days and weekdays in all the schools from which came what is today called the “Lasallian system.” Who could and could not be enrolled was precisely defined. Promotion through lessons took place according to a clearly defined schedule and method, done, as was everything else, “in a regular way.”⁷³² For Lauraire, along with the regulation of promotion in lessons (the “rigor of advancement”) the “distribution of students in various groups and lessons” was also a factor that “allowed order to be assured in the class.”⁷³³

One of the greater, if not the greatest, measures and, at the same time, manifestation of order in De La Salle’s school was silence, of the student and of the teacher:

Silence is one of the principal means of establishing and maintaining order in schools. For this reason, every teacher will enforce it rigorously in all of the classrooms and will permit no one to speak without permission.⁷³⁴

The more that silence is observed in your school, the more order there will be; therefore, see that silence is kept there.⁷³⁵

This norm of silence was to be preserved “all of the time”⁷³⁶ which included, among other times, entering the classroom upon arriving at school⁷³⁷ and, especially, when applying corporal punishment, during which “neither the student nor the teacher speaks.”⁷³⁸

When, then, could a student speak, especially in a louder voice? “Teachers will make students understand that they are permitted to speak only three times during the school day: when reciting their lessons, during catechism, and during prayers.”⁷³⁹

At other times, when speaking, they were asked to do so slowly and in a moderate tone:

Teachers will take care that those who are reciting the prayers and the responses of holy Mass or the catechism [during breakfast and afternoon snack] speak during this time very distinctly and in a moderately loud tone in order that all may hear them. Nevertheless, they should speak low enough so that the other students must keep silent, listen, and be attentive to those who are reciting.⁷⁴⁰

The silence required of the teacher was no less rigorous than that expected of the student: “One of the principal rules of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is to speak rarely in their schools.”⁷⁴¹ When? In general, “when it is necessary that all of the students hear what the teacher has to say.”⁷⁴² More specifically, as with the student, the teacher was to do so in three circumstances: when it was necessary to correct a student in reading, in catechism and in the morning and afternoon reflections.⁷⁴³ Added to this, the teacher spoke during verbal correction and the imposition of a penance.⁷⁴⁴ Just like the student, the teacher, in addition to speaking rarely, was encouraged to take care with how loudly he spoke: “Teachers will especially keep a strict watch over themselves, speaking only very rarely and in a very low tone when it is necessary that all of the students hear what the teacher has to say.”⁷⁴⁵

How did this work? Blain, the biographer, indicated in various passages of his text that silence became the tonic – surprising and wonderful – of the Lasallian schools, which were referred to as the schools where the teachers taught without speaking. In Rouen, for example, the archbishop Msgr. Colbert, “was pleased to see the Brothers’ new silent method.” In Avignon, the papal city, “people came to the (Lasallian) schools to satisfy their curiosity and to see a naturally disruptive group of children become recollected and attentive to lessons given without speaking.”⁷⁴⁶

As seen above, the reason De La Salle gave for silence in the classroom was that it would guarantee order, considered a condition for the creation of an environment advantageous for effective school work. Commentators on the founder add other motives: better use of time; the multiplicity of divisions existing in the school – in classes, lessons and levels of lessons; the large number of student who were generally divided into groups (“each class should contain between fifty and sixty students”⁷⁴⁷); and even the health of the teacher, for whom silence, especially in large groups, could help him save his voice.

Canon Roland contributed to De La Salle being involved in the world of education; but on the question of silence, he did not serve as a model, insofar as he expected frequent and multiple use of words in the classroom. Speaking to his neophyte religious teachers, De La Salle assured them that “nothing destroys the health of young people more than such [classroom] work, which requires them to talk nearly constantly.”⁷⁴⁸

An additional measure for the teacher not to have to raise his voice, or even use it, was to, as much as possible, use a diverse code, a “great number of signs,” and the characteristic “signal.”⁷⁴⁹ The *Conduct* gave the reason for such methods:

It would be of little use for teachers to apply themselves to making the students keep silent if teachers did not do so themselves. Teachers will better teach students this practice by example than by words. A teacher’s own silence will do more than anything else to produce good order in school, giving teachers the means of watching more easily over both themselves and their students; however, because there are many occasions on which teachers are obliged to speak, a great many signs have been established in the Christian Schools.⁷⁵⁰

Because of this, De La Salle insisted on its use: “Do not speak in the school. Get used to using the regular signs. This is our practice.”⁷⁵¹

The *Conduct* listed numerous signs, corresponding to the different academic situations that could occur (during the morning or afternoon meals, the reading hour, the catechism, the writing period, for corrections and for other events). Bring the hands together to indicate to the children that it is time to pray. Strike the book to be used with a hand, to direct the students to prepare to read. Click with the “signal,” in order to interrupt reading or to indicate that there was a mistake in reading. Use the end of the “signal” to point at the one who should continue or correct the word read incorrectly. Make a writing motion with the hand, so the student would understand that he should write. Stand up straight to indicate to the student that he had bad posture. Use the tip of the “signal” to indicate the placard where the duty that someone had failed in was written, etc.⁷⁵²

Anyone who knows the history of education knows that so-called strict school discipline, in De La Salle’s time, and for long afterwards, was considered something that could not be deviated from and was practiced with rigor. In adhering to it, the founder of the Christian Schools was a man of his time, just as in many other things. Thus, Maximin made the following observations:

After having read the *Conduct*, one has the impression that ... the discipline imposed on the students was inspired very little by the demands of a child’s nature, especially in their irresistible need for movement. But this austerity ... is explained, without a doubt, by the customs of the time, but the necessity in which the saint, along with his followers, tried to reduce to order and obedience the quantity of children left to their own devices and to poor upbringing.⁷⁵³

Separate from the modern and contemporary way of seeing these severe disciplinary practices, the fact is that, facing the educational conditions of De La Salle’s time of disorderly schools, with students of various ages mixed in a single classroom, with the noise common to the use of the individual mode of instruction, delivered by instructors with no specific institution for making them teachers, Lasallian students, orderly and disciplined in the school and in the street and pious in Church constituted for many that “new and edifying spectacle,” or “little miracle” of which Blain spoke.⁷⁵⁴

The desire for effectiveness and efficiency also brought De La Salle to emphasize other points. One of them, among the most important to him, was the integral **good use of time**.

That desire prompted him to write the following, at first glance surprising to anyone who knows him and, above all, his time: “We must omit some spiritual exercise rather than take class time to complete a necessary

errand, for we must not lose a minute of class.”⁷⁵⁵ According to the logic of his conviction, he wrote to Brother Denis: “So as not to waste the students’ time, finish in a few words with people who come to the school door.”⁷⁵⁶ By the same logic, upon taking on the school of Saint Sulpice, the first thing he did was to dedicate himself “to distributing very precisely the time such that each school exercise had a fixed duration and set time.”⁷⁵⁷

De La Salle made a commitment to making good use of time the object of frequent and periodic queries to his teachers. In the *Directories* on the rendering of accounts, one of the points in the self-examination was: “Whether you ever wasted time at school. Whether often or rarely? How much each time? What did you spend it on?”⁷⁵⁸ In the examination of conscience that he asked his Brothers to make at the end of the year, among other things, he asked them: “Did you waste time at school?”⁷⁵⁹ When, in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* he spoke to them of the aspects of the exercise of their mission for which they were accountable to God on a daily basis, one of the things he reminded them of was: “You will give an account of whether, in carrying out your work, you wasted time.”⁷⁶⁰

Among the directions in the *Conduct* related to this theme, the established criterion for the imposition of penances was paradigmatic, a criterion that, for one who knows De La Salle, could be extended to all types of activity in the schools: “Nothing that causes loss of time and that is useless should ever be given as a penance.”⁷⁶¹

Concretely, this care for making good use of time appears in many forms in the *Common Rules* and the *Conduct*.

The classroom time “will not be diminished, unless for some evident and unavoidable necessity.”⁷⁶² In order to spend as much time as possible in the classrooms, “no extraordinary holidays will be given without an evident and indispensable necessity.”⁷⁶³ “The Inspector of Schools shall direct the teacher to make each student read approximately as many additional lines as needed to fill all of the time assigned to reading in that class.”⁷⁶⁴ Those who handed out papers were to do so quickly, such that neither they nor others lose time that should be used for practicing writing.⁷⁶⁵ Moreover, upon entering the classroom, one of the warnings the student saw hanging on the wall was sentence number three: “You must write constantly, without wasting time.”⁷⁶⁶

The concern that time not be wasted was also behind the use of terms such as “immediately,” “directly,” “without delay,” referring to things such as the opening of classes by the teachers and their movement between community activities and the school.⁷⁶⁷

Likewise, the Lasallian interest in the effectiveness and efficiency of instruction and education is shown in the care that the founder and his co-founders took with the **subject matter**, which they felt should be essential, useful (that is, practical), advanced, sequential and measured.

Anselme referred to their quality of being essential: in De La Salle’s schools, “one learned only reading, writing, arithmetic and catechism. But this little bit was learned well.”⁷⁶⁸ Lauraire affirmed the same, in a more general way: “Within the (Lasallian) classroom, the organization of work had as its goal, before anything else, effectiveness: solid acquisition of what we would today called fundamental learning.”⁷⁶⁹ In the Lasallian classroom the perfect use of the basic instruments of culture (reading, writing and arithmetic) directed toward an honest and meaningful life were taught.

Regarding usefulness, it bears recalling that, in order for the students not to stop at understanding and accepting the Christian message, the *Conduct* recommended that, in every catechism class, the teacher constantly give “some practices to the students, and to instruct them as thoroughly as is possible concerning those things which pertain to morals and to the conduct which should be observed in order to live as a true Christian.”⁷⁷⁰

In this case, “every catechism class” included the classes on Sundays and feast days. At the end of catechism on those days, the teacher “will make some practical applications, which should be the fruits that the students ought to obtain from the subject which has been expounded to them.”⁷⁷¹

The history of education shows how, in De La Salle’s time and even after, there were those who opposed raising the level of instruction generally available. In other words, they resisted the same cultural level being made available to the poor as to the rich. De La Salle never agreed to this cultural restriction. On the contrary, beyond advocating for and promoting the generalization of instruction amongst the lower classes, he also entered into the movement of those who wanted to and assisted in broadening the horizon of knowledge for the children of the poor.

In effect, in the Christian Schools, they “showed” writing, as was said at that time. But, in doing so, they were not satisfied with teaching writing in its various forms, but also taught calligraphy, that is, beautiful, artistic writing, writing “in its perfection,” as they also used to say. This fact was attested to repeatedly. The bishop of Alais, in asking the Lasallian teachers to come to his diocese to contribute, through the school, to the definitive conversion of the local Calvinists to Catholicism, wrote: “It is necessary to win over these Huguenots by what interests them: making them see that these new teachers will train excellent calligraphers.”⁷⁷²

In addition to learning writing in its various forms and “in its perfection,” the Lasallian student also learned the individual steps – fourteen in all – for preparing the necessary pens for each type of writing.⁷⁷³ And still more: in some cases, introduction to linear design was added to this instruction, as happened, beginning in 1709, at the Saint Sulpice Sunday School in Paris. This introduction, along with the use of the pen, became, for the poor, an instrument to improve their lives.

The success achieved by the Lasallian school due to this qualitative “plus” resulted in the already mentioned new social phenomenon, that unexpected inversion whereby people able to pay for education (middle class artisans, petty bourgeois, teachers of different trades, surgeons, civil builders, carpenters and locksmiths, shopkeepers and barkeepers, in Paris, Rouen, and elsewhere) began to be interested in securing the privilege of the level of education offered by De La Salle to the poor for their own children. As a result, from the beginning of the 18th century, the Christian Schools began to depend on a second clientele, a minority but nonetheless significant, participating, thus, in the social movement that gave increasing importance to the petty bourgeoisie.

In the fourth place, the Lasallian subject matter was rigorously progressive, having clearly defined prerequisites. For reading, there were nine levels of progress, called lessons. In each, except for the alphabet, there were three levels of students: beginner, intermediate, and advanced (or perfect).⁷⁷⁴ At each level, what should be learned was minutely detailed.⁷⁷⁵ In the highest, that of reading documents, the *Conduct*, in its 1720 edition, prescribed that at the beginning, the students would be given,

so they can learn, more legible texts. Later, less easy ones. Then, in the measure that they advance, more difficult ones, making them thus progress until they are capable of reading the most difficult writings they could encounter.⁷⁷⁶

For round writing, five progressive levels were given and for script, eight.⁷⁷⁷ In the same way, “in arithmetic, as well as in the other subjects, it is with the most elementary examples that the lesson will begin and with the most advanced that it will end.”⁷⁷⁸

In teaching how to sharpen the pen for the various types of writing, the teacher showed the student three things to do, indicating the sequence to follow in the three operations, and had him practice everything that was shown to him.⁷⁷⁹

Regarding prerequisites, the *Conduct*'s insistence on learning the alphabet well (especially for learning to read) for everything that would follow is relevant:

It must be noted that it is of very great importance that students should study the alphabet until it is known perfectly; otherwise, they will never be able to read well and the teachers who will later be in charge of them will have great difficulty.⁷⁸⁰

Reading was a prerequisite to writing: “It is necessary that students should know how to read both French and Latin perfectly well before they are taught to write.”⁷⁸¹ This had been the usual practice in teaching since at least the time of Quintilianus.⁷⁸² In this, De La Salle and his followers and partners were men of their time. As such, they were absolutely confident of this method and tried to pass their confidence on to the parents, insisting that without it, “a student would never learn anything even if the child came to school for ten years,” and would never learn to read other than by rote, mechanically.⁷⁸³

A similar thing took place with writing. It was necessary to master the letters of the alphabet well before “beginning to write sentences.” Again, the certainty regarding the method used is seen: “One may be sure that by keeping to this practice the students will make more progress in one month than they would otherwise make in six.”⁷⁸⁴

Finally, with regard to content, in addition to sequential progression, the *Conduct* asked the teachers to measure the quantity of material given each time in order not to overwhelm and “confuse” the mind of the student. Thus, in correcting writing, the teacher [was directed that] “in the beginning care should be taken not to call attention to more than three or four mistakes,” and, in catechism, “each day [the teacher] will take and explain just one or two questions on the theme chosen for the week.”⁷⁸⁵ The subjects themselves were parceled out, in the sense that the large block of content, or larger units, were divided into small sections that could be assimilated more easily. A typical case was that of catechism, in which each theme was divided into questions and each question, when necessary, into sub-questions.

If the first members of the Christian Schools defended with vigor such practices as learning reading before writing, the writing of the alphabet before sentences, it was because they wanted, within the possible limits of the time, to use the **methods** and **techniques** that work, that teach and that do so in the least time possible, that is, that are efficient in achieving effectiveness, to ensure the progress of the students.

Anselme said that, “the classes being very numerous,” the methods “should be simple, nearly mechanical.”⁷⁸⁶ In Blain’s judgment, they were equally worthy of admiration.⁷⁸⁷ According to his testimony, the archbishop of Avignon, visiting the school opened under his auspices, “charmed by the methods used by the Brothers for teaching, spent hours observing them or listening to the students.”

Further addressing methods, the simultaneous mode of teaching merits mention. The use of the individual method, then still in vogue, certainly signified considerable loss of time in the classroom. Thus, one can state with certainty that De La Salle’s adoption of the simultaneous mode had to do with his concern for effectiveness in teaching and learning, and, to achieve it, one of the measures he defended was, as has been seen, the full use of time.

Concerning techniques, the *Conduct* described, point by point, those that should be used for teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Among them, one that cannot be missed is that of asking questions, which is truly an art. This technique and art was explored extensively, in a particular way in catechism: “Teachers will not speak to the students during catechism as though they were preaching, but will ask the students questions and sub-questions almost continuously.”⁷⁸⁸ Questioning was used to make the students understand what they study, to see whether they were following the lesson or whether they were effectively understanding the content taught, and to help in the retention of that subject matter, especially for students who had the most difficulty with that. Thus, the teacher asked various students the same question. If a weaker student did not remember the answer, the teacher would have one or various others give it to him, such that those with weaker memories hear it and then try to repeat it.⁷⁸⁹

This technique for appropriate questioning in catechism was the object of both observation and imitation. In Moulins, for example, where, the “Abbot” Languet, carried by his zeal, wanted

to witness the mode of instruction used by the Brothers. He was so enchanted, above all by their way of teaching catechism, that he ordered the two oldest Brothers to come to the parish two or three times to teach catechism to children publically, in the presence of the young clergy and the city’s other catechists, whom he required to attend the event, to learn and adopt the Brothers’ method.⁷⁹⁰

Related to **methods** and **techniques** were various practices of a didactic nature in which the Lasallian teachers believed, such as following a sequence of steps in learning according to the view of the time: first, understand, master the data of the reality and see the relationships between them; second, retain, fix what they understood in their minds; and third, practice, apply what they have understood and retained, using in their lives the information acquired.⁷⁹¹

Retention was accomplished above all through systematic and periodic repetition of the content to be learned, as when, in the Lasallian school, on Sundays, the questions and answers of the catechism taught during the classes in the previous week were reviewed, and by the persistent effort of practices to master, such as with reading, writing and arithmetic, social comportment and Christian living. De La Salle believed in the force of habit which, once established, grew in the student like a second nature. Along the same lines as Aristotle taught, for De

La Salle, repeated exercises create habits which, in turn, allow the practice of virtue, which can be fairly defined not as an eventual practice of a good act, but the habitual repetition, by nature, of a particular good.⁷⁹²

Other practices can be added to these, such as going from what was known to what was unknown; ensuring sufficient time for learning of each content element; balance between moving quickly and slowly; clarity and accessibility in the language used, etc.⁷⁹³

Along with using the best methods and techniques available at the turn from the 17th to the 18th century, De La Salle, used the most appropriate teaching **resources** available at the time or developed by the Community of Lasallian teachers and used in all their schools to assure, in the best way, the best results. These resources included academic texts, many composed or compiled by De La Salle himself, such as the *Syllabary* and two Psalters; placards for learning letters and syllables and how to do arithmetic operations; furniture constructed and used in a way to support the academic atmosphere and work; sentences visible to all the students so they would always remember the essential duties to be carried out; shelves with all the necessary materials for writing, etc.

De La Salle's interest in the quality of work undertaken in his schools was also expressed by the times he insisted on the **perfection** with which he wanted things done, as in these directions regarding the way that the teacher taught and prepared for a lesson and the way, in general, that he lived his state of life and exercised his teaching authority.

Those who are reading the third book will also be taught all the rules of French pronunciation, both how to pronounce syllables and words **perfectly** correctly and how to sound the consonants at the end of words when the following word begins with a vowel. The teacher will teach the students all these things while they are reading, calling their attention to all the mistakes in pronunciation which they make. The teacher will correct them carefully without overlooking any.

Do you believe that it is enough that you do everything at the proper time, without bothering about whether you are doing it **perfectly**?⁷⁹⁴

De La Salle wanted the radicalness that he asked of each teacher in his own human and spiritual vocation to be transferred to the academic arena. Thus in teaching, care for the details was one of many expressions of the perfection he sought in everything he did, as was rigor in learning.

This rigor recalls another Lasallian strategy for ensuring the effectiveness of the educational work: the seriousness with which the question of student **promotion** was handled.

The general principle was that only those who met the required standards were promoted: "Do not promote them to a lesson for which they are unprepared. Be careful about this; otherwise, they will learn nothing."⁷⁹⁵ Thus, the teacher "will take great particular care not to present to the Inspector any student to be examined for promotion in lesson or level who has not been very well prepared."⁷⁹⁶ The Inspector, to advance a student to the next lesson or level, "will show no preference or bear in mind any recommendation,"⁷⁹⁷ and likewise would not consider "age, size, or the time a student has been on a lesson."⁷⁹⁸

Why did the teacher "take great particular care not to present to the Inspector any student to be examined for promotion in lesson or level who has not been very well prepared"? Because "students easily become discouraged when they have been recommended by the teacher and then are not promoted by the Director or the Inspector."⁷⁹⁹

Promotion presupposed prior **evaluation**, another resource that, while verifying results, also promoted their improvement. Carrying out this evaluation, with the goal of keeping track of the student's improvement in light of the effectiveness of the educational process, is particularly notable when given the fact that, at that time, there was no official requirement for exams or, in broader terms, no external norm that obliged the Lasallian teachers to the often complex and burdensome process of verifying the results of study and recording them on a form.

Such free and interested evaluation was understood and practiced by De La Salle and his Brothers as an exercise that should be objective, systematic, continuous and immediate as well as comprehensive, as has been seen above in discussing integral Lasallian education.

It was objective in two senses. First, because it was carried out according to well-established parameters. For writing, for example, techniques to master and habits to acquire – shaping the pen correctly, making the linear and circular movements perfectly, writing in a straight line, observing the appropriate heights and widths, etc. – were clearly indicated.⁸⁰⁰ Second, because the final responsibility for evaluation did not fall to the teacher, whose judgment could be prejudiced by his affection for a student. While he proposed the names of students to be promoted from a lesson or level of lessons, the final decision on such a move was left to the Inspector of Schools.⁸⁰¹

The evaluation was systematic in the sense that it invariably covered what had been taught. The primary evaluation event was the monthly exam, when it was normally decided whether or not to pass the student to a new level or sublevel, with testing that lasted at times for more than a day. For example, in the initial stages of reading:

When a student has learned all the letters of the alphabet, and before moving to the second chart [the syllables], he will be given as a lesson, for several days, the entire alphabet, whose letters he will read in random order, to make sure he knows them all perfectly.⁸⁰²

Outside this major event, evaluation was frequent, throughout the day and the week, becoming practically continuous and often being conducted in an immediate way, with instant or nearly so verification of the material studied or correction of the error made.

The immediacy of this verification or correction was expressed in various ways with regard to the various curricular components. For reading: “When a student makes a mistake in the lesson, the teacher must be exact in striking the signal at the very moment that the mistake is made.”⁸⁰³ Likewise for writing: the teacher explained the meaning of the terms related to the letters to be written and would “afterward ask the explanation, saying, for instance, ‘What is meant by hangers?’” in a letter.⁸⁰⁴ While the students practiced their writing, he moved amongst them, seeing what mistakes they made and pointing out to them “the ways to correct them immediately.”⁸⁰⁵ Similarly with arithmetic, after explaining the terms referring to a specific operation, the teacher would “make the student repeat them before going further.”⁸⁰⁶

In some cases, immediacy might mean at the first opportunity to do so after the task was done. Thus, in learning spelling, the teacher would correct students by writing on the text they had copied. He would then require them to prepare a clean copy at home and “the first time correcting their spelling, he will be careful to make sure they do as directed.”

It bears pointing out that immediate evaluation presented several advantages. It was, for example, a way to encourage the student, to allow him to recognize his progress at the same moment that it occurred. It was also a way of avoiding having the errors he had committed possibly become fixed. The results of the evaluation were recorded in detail. That record allowed the teacher to follow the progress of each student, be continually aware of his progress in school, and assure that his parents be informed of their children’s achievements, large or small.

In addressing previously the care given to the promotion of students, the text of the *Conduct* was quoted that directed the teacher not to present a student who was not well prepared for examination by the Inspector at the end of the month. The justification for this direction was also given: because “students easily become discouraged when they have been recommended by the teacher and then are not promoted by the Director or the Inspector.”⁸⁰⁷ This care spoke to the Lasallian concern for contributing to educational effectiveness by the use of incentives and **motivation**. It spoke, in this case, of the desire not to demotivate through failure, but to encourage through excellence, through progress. As Morales observed, “There is no greater motivation for the student than knowing that he progresses and that his efforts have had results and are recognized.”⁸⁰⁸

In the Lasallian case, the fact that the students could progress in a relatively short period, that is, from month to month, constituted for them a periodic incentive to continue advancing, challenging them to achieve more, with the appeal of strong competition. Not of competition between students, but of rivalry with themselves, self-comparison, an incentive to individual achievement.

Lasallian education was also not unaware of another form of incentive, recommended by the manuals of the time and practiced along with competition, namely, encouragement by an appeal to honor. In the *Conduct*, there was an example that today certainly would sound a little odd. It posited the case of a student who could be advanced to the next lesson and was invited to delay the promotion to help his weaker colleagues. What

motivation did the Lasallian manual offer for this? The teacher would make the student understand “it is better to be first, or among the first in a lower grade than to be the last in a more advanced one.”⁸⁰⁹

Depending on the case, the motivation to encourage or awaken interest could be, in addition to some convincing reason, a touching example or an interesting story.⁸¹⁰ Additionally, there was the motivation, used at that time and long after, of rewards.

Even though the *Conduct* dedicated thirty-three pages to punishment and little more than two to rewards, rewards were used in the Lasallian school. While the Brothers “will love all their pupils tenderly,” they will not “give them anything through particular friendship.” What would they give? Encouragement and reward.⁸¹¹

The rewards were intended to award those who performed best in completing their duties, causing them to carry out those duties with pleasure, and also to encourage others, with the hope of awakening in them the aspiration of earning the same rewards. They were also intended to improve the attendance of those students who missed class through carelessness or laziness.⁸¹² The rewards – including books, images on paper or fine parchment, plaster figures, and written sayings – could award piety (good behavior), attendance and accomplishment (success in studies). Note the hierarchy, to which attention has been called earlier.

The prizes were divided into ordinary and extraordinary. The former, distributed by the teacher of each group, weekly and on the last day of class for the year; the extraordinary, by the Director or Inspector of Schools, monthly.

Two more observations on this theme:

First: Rather than material objects, the rewards could, at times consist of assigning a student a type of “office,” such as First Student in the Bench by which he would stay in the current lesson an additional month to assist his colleagues.⁸¹³

Second: Among the “offices” exercised, there were some whose holders were routinely rewarded at the end of each month: the Sweepers and the Visitors of the Absent Students.⁸¹⁴

In this effort to motivate through positive encouragement, the novelty was the care present for the weakest students, beyond diligence in the presentation of material least likely to naturally awaken the students’ interest:

Teachers will help students to apply themselves perfectly to the catechism class. This is not naturally easy for them and ordinarily does not last long. For this purpose, teachers will employ the following means: 1) they will take care not to rebuff or to confuse students, either by words or in any other manner, when they are unable to answer properly the question which has been asked them; 2) they will encourage and even help them to say what they have difficulty in recalling; and 3) they will offer rewards, which they will give from time to time to those who have been the best behaved and the most attentive, or sometimes even to the more ignorant who have made the greatest effort to learn well.⁸¹⁵

Continuing with the proactive pedagogical methods, De La Salle learned early that the great guarantee of effective and efficient education was the person of the **teacher**. He dedicated his best efforts to the preparation of the teacher. This is not the place to elaborate on this theme, but it will be important to note that, if the work of the founder of the Christian Schools prospered, the central factor in this was the type of teacher he helped to form.

It should be said, in the first place, that, agreeing with De La Salle, the teacher, knowing himself to be called and sent to the ministry of salvation through teaching, far from feeling lessened as a professional, felt particularly responsible in his function, encouraging pedagogical creativity, called to carry it out competently. Thus, the patron saint of educators was normally respectful in his language. One of the passages in which, straying from that habit, he used particularly energetic adjectives, not to say cutting, was when he spoke of the possible incompetence of the teacher regarding the knowledge he should have: “You must learn the truths of religion thoroughly by study, for ignorance in you would be **criminal**, because it would cause ignorance in those who are entrusted to you.”⁸¹⁶

Along with this, De La Salle wanted the teacher to be a person who steadfastly brought his whole self to his profession, devoting himself to the teaching profession for his entire life. Thus, the Brother could not be a priest or a married man. He was to be a religious educator: focused on God, with all the activities that involved, and on the student, with the commitments that implied. “Your [spiritual] exercises and your classes: they are your total concern.” “One of your main concerns, my very dear Brother, must be to apply yourself to interior prayer and to

the classroom.”⁸¹⁷ What De La Salle recommended in letters to Brother Hubert he gave as a norm for all his religious teachers, when he wrote to them that “God and his service [a service which for a De La Salle Brother is directly or indirectly the exercise of Christian teaching] ought to form the usual topic of conversation of those who have consecrated themselves to God.”⁸¹⁸

The Lasallian teacher was to have a high professional awareness. This, in addition to being expressed in the care with which he prepared for teaching, also showed itself in the responsibility with which he executed his role. His preparation made him professionally ready, supplying the material, methodology and specialized techniques for his work, and prepared him spiritually, cultivating in him the soul of an educator. To encourage his teacher in this preparation and the responsible carrying out of his mission, De La Salle not only showed him the importance and greatness of his mission, but also warned him of the account he would have to give of his performance. He did this in letters: “Apply yourself to interior prayer and to the classroom, because these are your two principal occupations, the ones for which you will render God a detailed account,”⁸¹⁹ and often in the *Meditations*, particularly the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.⁸²⁰

Administrative Measures

Thus far, the pedagogical measures for the effectiveness and efficiency of Lasallian education have been presented. Nothing has been said about the measures of an administrative nature that De La Salle also cultivated and used for the same end.

The first point to stress is the fact that he had seen that, in order to be effective, it was necessary to focus work on a limited and perfectly defined object and also the fact that he achieved that focus. With his companions on the pedagogical journey, De La Salle was making choices according to that focus, and rejecting options that were inconsistent with those choices. Strategically, he chose to dedicate himself exclusively to the school, and not to both hospitals and schools. He chose to operate in urban schools and not in both urban and rural schools. He preferred to dedicate himself primarily to the education of poor children and not equally to both poor and rich. These were the general lines of his choices. Concerning particular cases, as already seen, for example, in the case of the school of Saint Sulpice, where he put the work of reading and writing, arithmetic and catechism before the work of textile manufacturing and service as altar boys, to have the students concentrate on their particular work.

This commitment focused on a defined object brought with it the unification of the material to teach, the methods to employ and the organization and functioning to apply to all the Lasallian academic units, a unification that the *Conduct* called uniformity, which was to be respected, with exact observance of all the established practices and – the other side of the coin – with no change by an individual of what was “universally” practiced.

In this realm, the constant supervision, close to the schools, by the Director or Inspector was envisioned, supervision whereby both carried out the functions of observing, alerting, directing and suggesting.⁸²¹ Carrying out this task demanded the physical presence of these officials. De La Salle reminded them more than once: “[Father Ricordeau says] that you are not devoted to your school,” and, “You were wrong to leave class to go outside for such a thing as you suggested to me. I ask you not to let that happen again.”⁸²²

De La Salle personally accompanied all of the schools, visiting them and periodically receiving information via letters sent to him by the Directors responsible for them and by each Brother who worked in them. When the number of these grew, and he found it more difficult to accompany them personally, he designated two “Visitors” to be present with them, in his name and with tasks defined by him.

Finally, the measure suggested to the Director or Inspector regarding the teacher who had more difficulty in managing a class and making it productive: Give him a number of students proportional to his ability “to be able to teach well those entrusted to him.”⁸²³

Result: Source of Success

Seeking and achieving effectiveness and efficiency explains, in great part, the success that the first Lasallian schools had. Similar success, of public notoriety, is attested to, in the first place, by the abundance of students

attending them. As was the case of Jean Merlot: after having been with four other teachers, he was admitted by the Brothers, not because he was poor, but because his parents believed “that he would learn better there.”⁸²⁴

Likewise, the ever increasing requests for De La Salle’s teachers to serve almost everywhere in France bears witness to that success, as does the fact that teachers or teaching candidates asked to be able to go to De La Salle’s schools and observe the Lasallian *modus* of teaching. The Inspector, among his duties, had to monitor the teachers to make sure they did not allow people who had not been approved to enter the school, other than those who “had the Director’s permission to observe the classes and how they were given.”⁸²⁵

Another indicator of the high regard in which the schools were held and the quality and popularity of the catechism taught in them comes is the circumstance, recorded in the *Conduct*,⁸²⁶ and referred to previously here, of children and youths who were not regular students in the De La Salle schools asking to attend the catechism classes held on Sundays and feast days, to whom the teacher was asked to pay good attention and even to reward, especially “those who are eager to answer questions and make an effort to answer questions well.”⁸²⁷

The biggest proof, perhaps, of the success of this effective and efficient instruction was the opposition that De La Salle and his followers suffered, initially on the part of the teachers of the Little Schools and of the Writing Masters and, later, from members of the French elite.⁸²⁸

Assessment by the Historians of Education

A good number of the historians of education broach the different themes raised in this chapter and recognize the various contributions of De La Salle to raising the quality of available education. Among these themes, authors have focused particularly on the measures taken by the creator of the Christian Schools to make them effective and efficient. They seem to be convinced of the necessity of a favorable environment, of productive work to assure the quality of education. They are aware that, in the Lasallian school, time was assigned in detail, with clearly defined schedules; that in them, as Vincent asserted, there was a “calculated determination”⁸²⁹ of the work to be done in each of the divided units of time; that, as a result, no student or group of students were unoccupied at any time. Thus, Chartier and others observed that “the first part of the *Conduct* opens with the entrance and ends with the departure of the students from the school,”⁸³⁰ and that “between these two events, not a single moment was left to improvisation.”

Scholars observe that, different from what happened in the Charity Schools, which generally focused on catechism and the beginning of reading, De La Salle chose and developed a more advanced curriculum, “superior even to his century,” in Solana’s opinion.⁸³¹ On this point, Grosperin adverted to a strange paradox: that of a human group dedicated to instruction, challenged and excoriated not for incompetence, for teaching poorly, but for teaching too much – a community of religious teachers drafted from the “ignorant” who so elevate the secular instruction of the poor.

In terms of methods, more than one author alludes to the simultaneous mode of teaching, considering it one of the sources of the effectiveness of the Lasallian schools:

In addition to the priority given to French, ... other pedagogical innovations explain the success and effectiveness of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Established in the cities and operating always in teams of at least two or three, they could distribute the numerous students into classes and separate groups. The resulting homogeneity allowed them to set aside the individual method, occupying the children of a group with the same activity.⁸³²

Several also note the “genius for the school” that De La Salle possessed (or that possessed him?), of which Viard spoke.⁸³³ This “genius” referred to the pedagogical part as much as the administrative. Concerning the latter, many recognize De La Salle’s particular gift for academic organization. Adamson, for whom De La Salle had the right to be among those “whose true services to education administration were in fact considerable,”⁸³⁴ spoke for them, as did Giolitto, in saying that, in the 17th century, pedagogues such as he “laid the groundwork for the rational organization” of primary schools.⁸³⁵

There is practically a consensus amongst them in the affirmation of the work of the patron saint of educators regarding the formation of the teacher and the fundamental role of this for the quality of education achieved in the Christian Schools and in the success they achieved as a result of that quality.

They affirm De La Salle's valuing of "order" as a condition for effective learning. They consider him to be someone who contributed to conceptualizing it as it was traditionally understood and instituting it; who helped establish its principles; and who prescribed measures that it might hold sway and that it might be felt in his own schools. They differ, however, in the view that they take of this educational practice in Lasallian schools. Some consider it austere; others, as balancing rigor and gentleness; and others, mild for its time.

They observe, in these schools, a two-fold and complementary practice of discipline: preventative and corrective. They list means that, in their view, the Lasallian pedagogue would use to prevent faults: the use of silence, physical discipline, quality teaching, the educational presence and good example of the teacher, the creation of a favorable physical and moral environment, the knowing of each student, etc.

This chapter, along with its riches, is also the one that raises the most problems amongst the historians. There are, among them, more and less acerbic criticisms of relative aspects of the various means used by De La Salle for effectiveness and efficiency in teaching.

Among the preventative measures, a point that has, throughout time, received not a few criticisms, especially amongst those who do not read De La Salle in his context, is the vigilance of the teacher, in its various forms. It also has its defenders, such as Anselme, who, still recognizing that this practice, in the *Conduct*, "seems severe to us," said that, in the case of De La Salle, it "is explained by the great number of students" who share the classroom.⁸³⁶

Of the proactive measures with a view to creating an environment advantageous to academic work, the theme of greatest controversy and criticism is silence, so admired, nonetheless, by De La Salle's contemporaries. Anselme, while sympathetic to Lasallian initiatives as a whole, agreed in that, according to more recent standards, such practice should have been counterbalanced with spontaneous expression by the students. This author, speaking in 1922 of Lasallian pedagogical principles and practices that should be tempered by other practices, had in mind the characteristics of the "New School" that was bubbling up at that time. Thus, he wrote, "The importance of silence: It is necessary when the teacher speaks to everyone. But it is also good to allow and favor the students' initiative and activity, and the learning of freedom."⁸³⁷

Linked to silence is the use of signs and of the "signal," which also receive a variety of positions. Among those who criticize them, Compayré was particularly bruising; he spoke of the "school telegraph."⁸³⁸ Here again, Anselme, more than once, offered a different voice: "There was perhaps an abuse of signs, which could become mechanical. This school telegraph was also justified by the very large groups of students."⁸³⁹

The point possibly most criticized (or misunderstood?) of the Lasallian educational practice are the corrective measures that De La Salle called "corrections," especially physical punishments. These deserve special treatment in the next chapter.

Along with the punishments, the authors also refer to the rewards. They note that there is, in De La Salle's writings, a system of rewards designed to award and encourage the student's effort, that the space given to them in the *Conduct* is considerably less than that given to corrections, and that there is a hierarchy of reward. In the list of prizes distributed they include the so called "good points" and the "privileges."⁸⁴⁰ But, in doing so, they make an error, because this practice was not usual in the Lasallian schools during the founder's lifetime, being introduced only much later in the *Conduct*.

In speaking of the Lasallian Institute and of the religious teachers that made it up, one of the points that the authors draw attention to is the focus on the educational work, with the advantages this brought. Equally, they notice the strong unity, even uniformity, existing amongst the teachers. While some capture this reality as one of the factors in the success achieved by their schools, others see it as restricting the teachers' free creativity.

In this regard, it should be recalled that the aspects established to be practiced in a uniform way were not imposed from outside the group, but were thought of, experienced and established by the very people following them, "together and by association"; that, as an effort undertaken at the beginning of being constructed and of

collective construction, it also dealt with a care for establishing an identity not yet fully set and recognized, such that that which existed was not prohibition pure and simple of initiative, but the desire to deter arbitrariness, the need to propose what was imagined to those that were responsible in that time and place, so that the practices introduced could become more than individual experience; that, in practice, the *Conduct* was periodically revised, gathering the experiences of the most accomplished, through assemblies of the “principle Brothers”; and that, finally, there were passages in the Lasallian pedagogical manual that explicitly encouraged the timely search for measures that seemed more appropriate, or that would be discovered by “prudence and charity,” or by “the ability of an attentive and thoughtful teacher.”⁸⁴¹



Fraternal Education

8

De La Salle within His Social Context

To address this topic, it is important to return to what was developed at the beginning of the study of Lasallian education as “popular education.” First, several elements of the social context of the time and their reflection in education should be recalled: social inequality, reproduced in education, which was offered and developed according to “people’s condition [status]”; social stability and the school functioning as an instrument of conformity to the *status quo*; and the rigidity of the social structures, along with the regime of privileges and the respect for them, with their repercussion on the defense, for example, of the rights acquired by the teachers of the Little Schools and the Writing Masters. Additionally, it is interesting to recall De La Salle becoming aware, on the one hand, of that social reality and, on the other, of God’s salvific plan for all people (all and not just some) and contributing to the promotion of the less favored (that is, contributing to carrying out the divine plan) with his own social demotion and his work for the promotion of the poor, through the creation of a popular school of quality made to measure for them.

Anticipation of a Better Society

To the aspects already seen, one must add that De La Salle, after accomplishing an economic, social and cultural exodus to establish himself in the popular world and to involve himself with the school favoring that world, tried to transform, not just in theory but above all in practice, this instrument of education in anticipation of a better society. He did this in two ways: **not reproducing** the ruling **social stratification** in the schools and **making of it a laboratory of social life and Christian brotherhood**.

Non-Reproduction of Social Stratification

A first Lasallian effort was to try not to reproduce, in their school, the stratification of the French society of the time and to facilitate bringing together the less and more fortunate of that society. In terms of principles, De La Salle did not tolerate any discrimination based on birth or means. To the contrary, the ruling practice of having two separate schools for the two different social categories of children (Charity School only for the poor, who did not pay, and the Little School, in practice, only for the rich and those who paid) was not followed. Contrary to what happened in the Charity Schools of his time, De La Salle did not make the parents’ poverty a condition for enrolling their children in the Christian School. He did not want it to be a ghetto for the poor. For him, the reason for admitting them was not poverty, but the need to benefit from the type of education offered by the Christian School.

Beyond this, in the Lasallian school, there were other factors that were part of the same goal of the diminishing of barriers and the bringing together of social layers. First was the development of good manners and of habits of physical hygiene, which let them interact more easily with children of a higher social level.⁸⁴² Second, and on a

large scale, was the gratuity practiced in the Lasallian school. It was a factor that inhibited inequality, because the social privilege of paying distinguished the rich from the poor. Gratuity allowed those who were better off also to benefit from the good education offered to the more needy, without the poor feeling belittled by the presence of the rich. Beyond this, gratuity for all spared the poor from the stigma of studying at a school reserved, that is, “set apart,” for them.

Additionally, the extent to which this school allowed the poor to be on intimate terms with the artisans and the petty bourgeoisie put them in a good position to enrich their vocabulary, more refined manners and useful contacts for their lives, especially their future professional life.

Laboratory of Social Life and Christian Brotherhood

At the same time that De La Salle worked not to reproduce the negative aspect, that is the social stratification of his times and milieu, he tried to cultivate in his school positive social relationships and Christian brotherhood, through the lived relationships of 1) the teachers with one another, 2) the teachers with the students, and 3) the students with one another.

The Teachers with One Another

The religious Institute created by De La Salle was a quiet response to inequality in the midst of a world marked by differences of every kind. His religious Community was based on the total equality of its members. Previously, this study alluded to the criteria that the Lasallian religious educators used for admitting new members to their Institute. Fiévet explained them in very similar terms, saying that

they admitted anyone inclined to join them in their way of living and in the purpose of the Institute. Admission to the novitiate was not made on the basis of economic criteria, but on the desire and ability to surrender himself entirely and in a communal way to God in the service of the poor.⁸⁴³

Likewise, it has already been noted that the Lasallian teachers, once they entered the Institute, did not learn Latin and, if they had studied it previously, stopped using it. It is again observed that historians of education see in this proscription a factor that contributed to orienting these teachers more definitively toward the poor and the elementary instruction of the poor. This is an historical fact, as is the fact that they came to complete and enrich De La Salle’s original intention by including this norm in the *Common Rules*. The intention, according to Blain, who was an eyewitness to the Lasallian beginnings, was to put all of the founder’s followers “on the same level.”⁸⁴⁴

It is significant that those associated with the Lasallian Community decided to call themselves not teachers, but **Brothers**. In the rules of life approved by them, the second thing they wrote was that “the members of this Institute will call themselves Brother.”

According to Maillefer’s testimony, “This name seemed to them to conform more to the common life that they had embraced. It served to cement the union that should reign between them.”⁸⁴⁵

Blain described this choice in a longer and more discursive way, in his own particular style:

The change in habit brought about the change in name. The name of Brothers was suitable ... once they assembled to form a single body. After that, the title of Brothers, which nature gives to sons of the same blood and same earthly father, and which charity adopts for sons of the same Spirit and same heavenly Father, fell to them by right.

That name taught them that charity, which gave birth to their Institute, should be its soul and life. That it should preside over all deliberations and be the origin of all its plans. That it must prompt their activity and direct them in all their initiatives, animating all their words and actions. It – that name – told them that, Brothers to one another, they should be manifestations to one another of affectionate as well as spiritual friendship.⁸⁴⁶

They were Brothers, independent of whether or not they held offices and what offices they held, all understood as a service to people and to the community.

It seems that the model that De La Salle had in mind for his Institute was that of the “Societies of Common Life,” without public vows, and not that of the classical congregation it would later become (which absolutely does not mean that he did not want his Brothers to be religious in the full sense of the word). Patrice Marey noted that

cohesiveness, team spirit are common enough in newly-hatched groups: political, unions, sports, artistic. Cohesiveness at the beginning that later becomes a point of reference as the “golden age.”

The same thing happened in the Church, in which there is the “golden age” of the first community of Jerusalem ... This model inspired, later, the communities of faithful that were founded, particularly the Religious Institutes.⁸⁴⁷

One of these Institutes was that created by Saint John Baptist de La Salle. If, as was said, it seemed that he imagined, structurally, a type of “Society of Common Life,” what is absolutely certain is that he wanted a human group inspired by the first Christian community, that described in the Acts of the Apostles, that had “one soul and one heart” and whose members had “everything in common.” He stated this explicitly in one of his meditations: “[The early disciples] had but one heart and one mind ... There is nothing that you must more earnestly ask of him than this union of mind and heart with your Brothers.”⁸⁴⁸

As Maillefer had it, De La Salle had the happiness of seeing his desire fulfilled. Maillefer emphasized that De La Salle saw the same utopia presented by Luke in *Acts of the Apostles* reproduced in the first Lasallian communities:

The Brothers had one heart and one spirit. They lived helping one another with tender and compassionate charity. They held everything in common. No personal interest divided their attention, such that, by the regularity of their movement forward, they were a clear reflection of the life of the first Christians.⁸⁴⁹

When everything began between them, John Baptist de La Salle himself served as an example to encourage them to live out equality and brotherhood. To their admiring eyes, he was taking the steps, now familiar, toward identifying with them in poverty and insecurity.

His effort progressively to build community with them was not unreciprocated. The Brothers with whom God had united him, according to the confession of faith made in his *Testament*, made them live the experience of brotherhood, with several particularly significant moments: when, in 1694, upon insisting that De La Salle become their superior, they expressed to him repeatedly their confidence and attachment through successive unanimous votes; when, in 1702, at the time when the archbishop tried to replace him as director of the Institute, the Brothers affirmed their affection and desire to continue the presence of their pedagogical and spiritual leader and director; and, above all, when, in 1714, with the letter of the “principal Brothers,” he recognized and was reaffirmed in his vocation as founder until the end of his life.

Through the years, De La Salle, the former canon of the cathedral of Rheims, was, with them, defining and building the fraternal community appropriate to his vocation. The *Common Rules* expressed how the Brothers understood and, above all, how they tried to live out brotherhood in the communal environment. They explained the understanding and living that they proposed in two chapters: the third, which spoke of “The Spirit of Community in This Institute and the Exercises Performed in Common in It” and the thirteenth, which addressed “How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves toward One Another.”

Concerning the actions practiced in favor of brotherhood and the way of carrying them out, this normative text addressed issues such as having and doing things in common, serving the Brothers with pleasure, speaking of them with esteem, testifying to the unity existing amongst them, and even carrying out their mission together, with unity and even uniformity, “together and by association.”

This expression – “together and by association” (the Lasallian trademark) – was already implicitly included in the “heroic vow” of 1691: “[We] make the vow of association and union to bring about and maintain the said establishment [the Christian Schools].⁸⁵⁰ By this vow, De La Salle’s work, at the threshold of ruin, “prepared ways to escape and to save itself in the indissoluble union and the invincible confidence of its leader and its two principal members.”⁸⁵¹ With this, and even before being a consensual commitment in view of the future, this vow was a demonstration and celebration of the solid confidence and deep union that already existed between those who took it.

Later, in the formula of the first perpetual vows made on June 6, 1694, by the founder and twelve of his co-founders, each said: “[I] promise and vow to unite myself and to remain in Society with ... to keep together and by association gratuitous schools.”⁸⁵² Each one adding to their own name the name of all the other co-brothers who committed to him.

All having thus assumed the obligation of realizing their educational project together as members of a religious congregation, De La Salle encouraged them to make their association “strong, solid” and “indissoluble,” trusting in God and choosing someone like themselves – that is, not a priest, like him – to govern them. To highlight one of the strong arguments that he used in his intention of bringing them to that choice: above all, that is, above the other reasons given, if a priest continued being their superior, his clerical status, “introducing a difference between him and them, and him not knowing the customs or ways of doing things, your principles and practices, how could you constitute **one heart and one soul?**”⁸⁵³

De La Salle was not replaced as superior. On June 7, one day after those first perpetual vows and his having been re-elected as superior, the Brothers all signed the act of election, adding a new commitment: “Associated with John Baptist de La Salle to lead, together and by association, the gratuitous schools ..., by the vows we took yesterday,” they declared that, after De La Salle, “no one who is a priest will be elected by us as superior; that we will neither have nor permit any superior who is not associated with us and who has not taken our vows and like all the rest who associate themselves with us in the future.”⁸⁵⁴

After De La Salle’s death, the *Bull of Approbation* of the Institute, dated 1725, read, in its sixth paragraph: “That they always be associated to direct the schools, and have at least two [Brothers] for the direction of each.” *At least two*. The Lasallian work was not an undertaking of isolated people. It was not the work of lone rangers, but of a community of teachers, a body of educators, co-responsible and in solidarity. Educational work by a team was the principal and practical criterion invariably taken into consideration by De La Salle when discerning whether or not to accept an invitation to open or take over some educational work.

Why did he not agree to work in rural schools? Because each small school, separated one from another, did not need more than one teacher. Thus, it made impossible the communitarian work of educators in the same center and was a barrier to the pedagogical fruit that such an arrangement bore. Poutet explained it thus: Why did De La Salle opt for schools in the city? Because of “pedagogical concern with organizing each school in the most efficient way. Having, to the extent possible, schools with three or four classes, to build more lively communities of teachers, which favored better teaching.”⁸⁵⁵

On September 26, 1704, writing to Msgr. Des Hayes, a priest of Rouen who asked for his Brothers, De La Salle made it clear: “You know that ... we cannot send only one Brother.”⁸⁵⁶

The communal norm became strong much earlier, at the heart of the new religious society. Already in the 1680s, the Duke of Mazarin had asked De La Salle’s Brothers to teach in two separate places on his properties. The founder made the counterproposal for accepting, in a Seminary for Teachers of the Interior, young men to train for teaching in six to twelve months. The seminary was opened in Rheims in 1687. There, as well, the reason for refusing was that he did not want to see his own teachers scattered across isolated schools. For him and his Brothers, communitarian life and work were already essential.

Adrien Nyel, before going to work in Rheims, had tried to recruit, in Rouen, young men who would agree to dedicate their lives entirely to teaching, living celibately and being content with only what was absolutely essential. However, his intention did not come to pass, because it is difficult to live in total isolation and constant denial.

The same thing did not happen to De La Salle because (among other reasons) he had the charism to create a community. Throughout his entire life, he knew how to make his companions participate in shaping and defending the identity of their incipient Community and, in a conscious and progressive way, he was bringing them to take it into their own hands. He helped them to cultivate this “precious gem.”⁸⁵⁷ He had them taste the benefits of the community with regard to people and mission.

From the point of view of the personal life of each of his religious teachers, he wanted the community to be a place of intellectual enrichment and a source of spiritual dynamism, as well as a place of mutual encouragement to the highest perfection,⁸⁵⁸ knowing that such enrichment, dynamism and perfection would have direct repercussions on their educational work and on their dispositions and ways of carrying out [their duties] with their students.

For De La Salle and the members of his community, acting “together and by association” bore the fruit of progressive improvement in their initial educational project. The *Conduct* was the consubstantiation, the record, the result of a concerted labor, and at the same time the testimony of how much that type of activity could achieve even among people without exceptional theoretical and technical preparation. It is known that this book, important in the history of elementary education, was born of the work of this team of people interested in educational improvement who, systematically placing their experience in common through multiple dialogues on their pedagogical practices, were becoming aware of what, amongst those practices, was and was not productive. They discerned together to reach a consensus on what to keep or add, because it was effective, and what to take out or modify, because it was idealistic or not useful.

Equally in the *Common Rules*, where several of its chapters also spoke of education, De La Salle preferred to give them definitive written form only after they had been passed through a sufficiently long experience of all his religious teachers and become established in practice.⁸⁵⁹

In very concrete questions, thinking and working the project together and by association gave it the guarantee of the strength that came from the unity and the sum of the talents in carrying it out. It allowed the daily assistance of one another, as in the supervision of the various movements of students from one place to another, or the successive integration of activities, such as the historical record of the student’s life, through the “Register” of his “good and bad qualities,” revised at the end of the school year by each new teacher.

It has been said that De La Salle wanted the community to be a place of mutual help and encouragement to the highest moral and spiritual perfection. The same could be said on the professional level. The community was to make opportunities for the transmission to all, but especially to the youngest, of the richness and variety of each member’s pedagogical experiences.

Additionally, De La Salle, as a good administrator, preferred to have somewhat larger communities serving several schools in the same city. One Director and a single “administrator” for a group carrying out various jobs would allow him to keep costs lower, which would benefit the poor children, in that it made gratuitous schools more viable.

Being a “community of teachers” was one of the fundamental reasons for the success, geographical expansion and continuity across time of the Christian Schools. This was true even during De La Salle’s lifetime. What happened in the city and diocese of Lyon is paradigmatic. Charles Démia, the eminent educator, lived and worked there, responsible for education in the diocese. To serve the students in his schools, he required the seminarians to spend four hours of their time each day teaching class. After Démia’s death in 1689, a divide arose between those who were in favor of continuing with that system and another group who advocated for having De La Salle’s Brothers come to take over the schools previously under Démia’s control. Bouillet, the treasurer of the schools and executor of Démia’s will, argued in favor of the Brothers. Among the reasons he gave to support his point of view was that “they live in community and follow consistent pedagogical methods, in such a way that the substitution of one teacher for another does not hamper the student.”⁸⁶⁰

In the same way, and with nearly identical phrasing, Merrez, vicar general of the bishop of Alais, opted for the educational service of De La Salle’s Brothers. He also did it because he was convinced that “only a community can guarantee the continuity of good teachers and replace those who die or are not in a position to teach.”⁸⁶¹

The Lasallian community did not only ensure replacement of a teacher in the case of his death or definitive decline. It also provided for such substitution when a teacher's absence was temporary due to health or some other reason, such that illness would not interrupt teaching, there being alternative teachers. There were Brothers charged with general services, known, in the tradition of the Institute, as "Temporal Brothers." Ordinarily, they worked as part of the infrastructure of the community, but they were sufficiently prepared to be able, in some emergency situation, to substitute for a teacher in class.

Teachers with the Students

To begin, it is useful to recall that in the 17th century, during the Lasallian upsurge, there was no code of an official nature that regulated either the nature or the extent of relations between teachers and students. What is more interesting is to see how educators and pedagogues – in De La Salle's case – dealt with this issue.

To one who reacts from a modern sensibility and is accustomed to today's relational practices, it will seem strange that the *Conduct*, speaking of how to be a teacher, insisted so strongly on the teacher's seriousness in his contact with students; that it required of the student an almost sacred respect for the teacher; and that the entire second part of the manual was dedicated to school discipline or, in the language of the book itself, to the "Means of Establishing and Maintaining Order in the Schools," such as vigilance, rigor regarding physical posture, silence, punishments and penances.

But, one who is dispassionately attentive will notice that, behind that seriousness, demand for respect, and disciplinary rigor, beat the heart of an educator with a personalized interest in his student, of someone who, in the style of the time in which he lived, wanted good for his student: his material good (by laying a better foundation from which he would be able to be employed); his intellectual good (by the material assigned and the mental operations developed); his social good (by the good manners taught and trained and by the opening to new perspectives on life); and his spiritual good (by catechesis, spiritual exercises and practice of the virtues and Christian life).

The biographers help us capture this relationship between the affection that the Lasallian teachers wanted to establish between themselves and their students. They tell us that the followers and collaborators of De La Salle did not want to call themselves teacher but purposefully chose to be known as Brothers, not only because for them, in their time, *teacher* implied money, payment, and that *Brother* brought to mind gratuity and Gospel simplicity; not just because they proposed to live fraternally and by association amongst themselves; but also, and foremost, because they wanted to be older Brothers to their younger brothers, that is, their students.⁸⁶² This name, as Blain wrote, reminded them that "considering themselves older Brothers to those who come to be taught by them, they should exercise that ministry of charity with a kind heart."⁸⁶³

Texts other than the *Conduct*, such as the *Meditations* and the *Common Rules*, also addressed this extensively. They all called for a relationship of tenderness and insisted on the Brothers having and giving affection for and to their students: "Love all your students tenderly."⁸⁶⁴

In speaking of the blessedness of gentleness, the founder stated that "the one who conquers the hearts of men conquers the world."⁸⁶⁵ He said this speaking of the relationship amongst the Brothers, but it applied equally to their relationship with their students. Not only should they not be afraid to conquer the heart, they must perfect themselves by doing so, by winning their confidence and affection. This was the pedagogical path to bringing their students to "live in a Christian way," the springboard to God's plan.⁸⁶⁶

As on other points, for example, in the Christian ideal that he proposed to the students, as well as concerning the love to have for them, De La Salle suggested an ambitious level of quality and commitment. He said that the care, the attentiveness to have with the children entrusted to the teacher should be in no way less than that which Saint Joseph had for the Infant Jesus, and that the zeal for the good of their students should have as its model nothing less than the heavenly Father, who "so loved the world that he sent his only Son,"⁸⁶⁷ and again, "Your zeal must go so far in this that to achieve it, you are ready to give your very life, so dear to you are the children entrusted to you."⁸⁶⁸

De La Salle missed no opportunity to have his followers practice this extreme manifestation of their zeal for their students. In 1705, for example, a contagious disease struck Chartres, taking the lives of many of the city's

residents. Blain wrote that, in that situation, De La Salle's charity extended to the point of leaving the Brothers exposed to possible infection "rather than their depriving the children who so needed them."⁸⁶⁹ In this submission even to martyrdom, albeit bloodless, De La Salle himself lived and gave witness in what he did.

Although the holy priest did not have to die for the propagation of the Christian doctrine, he was, in a sense, a martyr for it, through the difficulties and tribulations through which he passed for nearly forty years, in order to establish his Institute and the gratuitous schools.⁸⁷⁰

Don Bosco wrote in a letter in 1884, "It is not enough to love the young people; they must feel loved."⁸⁷¹ That is, love for them cannot just be sentiment, it must be sentiment made evident in audible words, in gestures that could be felt, in effective actions. Almost two hundred years earlier, De La Salle already said this in another way, presenting palpable love as perceptible evidence of the teacher's zeal for the good of his student: "Act in such a way through your zeal that you give tangible proof that you love those whom God has entrusted to you."⁸⁷² In more simple terms, De La Salle wanted that affection, love for the students, be concrete. This love was to take forms such as being with them, to be able to educate them more appropriately by knowing them, and staying near them to rescue them, proactively, from evil and to place them on the path of practicing good.

In addressing the simultaneous mode as a way of teaching in order to handle more students, it is acknowledged that De La Salle's Brothers did not abandon the beneficial elements of one-on-one instruction. In the 19th century, for example, when they wanted to impose simultaneous teaching exclusively and universally in France, they became a bastion against its sole use because, among other reasons, such a way of teaching would weaken the very Lasallian practice of direct connection between the teacher and student,⁸⁷³ a connection, for example, significantly present in teaching writing, in the moment at which the teacher directed the student's hand with his own.⁸⁷⁴

This love combined itself with and even expressed itself through the balanced exercise of authority with which the teacher was invested by the parents, to ensure the good progress of the classes as a result of the growing effectiveness of the students.

This concrete love, this affection and tenderness, did not mean an absence of firmness in requirements, nor capitulating to whims or misconduct, as Poutet and Pungier definitively demonstrated.⁸⁷⁵ It dealt with maintaining the middle ground, balance. Balance, thus, seems to be the best word to express the kind of teacher-student relationship that De La Salle proposed: balance between firmness on one hand and kindness, affability, tenderness, and gentleness on the other.⁸⁷⁶

The paradigmatic text on this position is that which De La Salle wrote in the meditation dedicated to the patron saint of gentleness, Saint Francis de Sales:

If you have for them the firmness of a father to restrain and to withdraw them from misbehavior, you must also have for them the tenderness of a mother to draw them to you and to do for them all the good that depends on you.⁸⁷⁷

Every Lasallian educator today knows this recommendation by heart and repeats its abbreviated form: Have with your children the firmness of a father and the tenderness of a mother. It is not simply a matter of balancing the two contrasting attitudes, but also of balance in meting each out: affability without familiarity; kindness not confused with weakness; gentleness not taken as condescension or complacency or impunity; and, on the other hand, firmness not associated with inflexible rigidity.⁸⁷⁸ In summary, as the *Conduct* of 1720 said: "Firmness cannot degenerate into rudeness, nor moderation into slackness or weakness."⁸⁷⁹

The idea of balance between firmness and moderation and the degree to maintain for each of these attitudes was addressed more fully and fundamentally in the introduction to the chapter on correction in the "first" edition of the *Conduct*. And if imbalance is necessary? Err on the side of tenderness: The teacher "should try to be more loved than feared."⁸⁸⁰

This also brings to mind the judicious recommendation given to the Formator of New Teachers: try to persuade them that "it is not harshness and rigor that produce good order in a school. Good order is the result of constant vigilance, combined with circumspection and mildness."⁸⁸¹

This emphasis on the teachers' making themselves loved and on kindness should be underlined, bearing in mind the circumstances of De La Salle's time and the reality lived by not a few Lasallian students. This is what prompted Fiévet to write:

Despite the austere spiritual vocabulary of the 18th century, John Baptist de La Salle – especially in his *Meditations* – returns 222 times to the term *kindness* and 78 times to the term *tenderness* ... In the hard world that was his, in families in which many children had no experience of tenderness from their mothers (due to her premature death or successive wet nurses), living out a kind of relationship in which the child feels loved and knows that he can respond with love, would, without a doubt, exceed all expectations.⁸⁸²

With all these emphases, it does not cease to be true that for De La Salle and his teachers, love expressed through relationship made both firm and tender at the same time can and even should, at times, result in what is today called “tough love,” whose extreme manifestation was correction, which was not, in any way, to interrupt the good relationship between the teacher and student, nor the mutual affection that dedicated them to one another.

De La Salle's followers tried to maintain this combination of rigor and kindness permanently after his death. Many great personages attested to it and proclaimed it to the four winds. Lacordaire wrote, referring to them: “Obscure apostles to the French poor create, without fanfare ... , the law of order, of peace, of honor and of fraternity.” Lamennais added: “Men who make themselves respected through the serious austerity of their clothing, of their love and of their kindness.”⁸⁸³

Locke, in a beautiful text, described it when writing:

It is necessary, because I know of nothing but tenderness, manifested in all things, that can make the child understand that people love him, that they want nothing more than their good. It is the only way of hoping for the child's reciprocating affection, affection that will bring him to listen to his teacher's lessons and to like what he teaches him.⁸⁸⁴

In the meditation already referred to, De La Salle also promised his teachers that, if they treated their students with the care and tenderness of the good shepherd, they would love him and feel good in his company.⁸⁸⁵ Blain testified to how the Lasallian teachers saw this promise realized. He showed how the students expressed tenderness toward them and showed their fondness for them, “even in places where the Brothers suffered the most persecution, such as in Paris and Rouen.”⁸⁸⁶

Corrections

We have just spoken of “tough love,” on the part of the teacher, and its extreme manifestation, the correction of the student. This completes De La Salle's educational system. This topic, especially, was among those addressed most extensively in the Lasallian texts, including the *Conduct* (On Corrections); the *Common Rules* (How Brothers Should Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils), the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat* (“The Obligation That the Brothers of the Christian Schools Have to Reprove and Correct the Faults by Those They Are Charged to Teach”), and even an essentially spiritual text such as the *Collection of Various Short Treatises* (On the Ten Conditions Necessary for Corrections to Be Appropriately Administered).⁸⁸⁷ Such abundant reference to the question makes it impossible not to raise it openly when dealing with relations between the teacher and the Lasallian student.

According to the *Conduct*, in the Lasallian school, correction⁸⁸⁸ took on various forms: verbal reprimand; penances, that is, non-corporal punishments (such as coming to school early for several days for having been late to class; writing one or several pages, at home, for not having written what was assigned or for having done it poorly; memorize something, indicated as one of the “most appropriate and useful” penances); physical punishment, such as the ferule and rod (and, initially, also the whip); and lastly, possible dismissal from school, justified only “for a very extraordinary reason” and carried out in very precisely defined cases and situations.⁸⁸⁹ In reality, correction which, for us, even today, covers a variety of corrective measures, was identified largely with physical punishment in the Lasallian context.

For the sake of truth and to be able to understand this question in its time, it is important to remember that, in the 17th century and even much later, physical punishments were seen and practiced as something fully normal, not only at school but in the family and in society in general. Buisson, telling the history of this “educational” practice, observed that

the father’s slap is the beginning of pedagogy. This primitive, early proceeding was perfected with the use of the cane, which remained, for centuries, the emblem of education, just as the scepter (a variation on the cane) is the emblem of monarchical power, and a bundle of canes, of collective sovereignty.⁸⁹⁰

Iconography confirms this. For a long time, including the 17th century, the teacher frequently appeared with a whip or ferule in his hand, as symbols and instruments of his authority.

Franca also confirmed it, with particular historical reference:⁸⁹¹

The proverb “spare the rod and spoil the child” was held to be an axiom by our good ancestors. On the solemn day of investiture, as a symbol of his disciplinary mission, the teacher received officially a whip.⁸⁹² And he did not receive it in vain. Pierre Tampête, principal of the College of Montaigu, earned the sad nickname of the *grand fouetteur des enfants* (the great whipper of children). In 1520, to a friend who consulted him concerning the education of young children, the rector of the University of Paris, Tixier de Ravisi: “When someone makes a mistake, or is caught lying, when they try to shake the yoke, grumbling or complaining, strike them hard, and do not stop striking them or soften the punishment until their arrogance is broken and they become calmer than oil and less resistant than melon pulp.”⁸⁹³

Jolibert, speaking specifically of this custom in France’s *Ancien Régime*, stated that, if there were those who extolled gentleness there were also “teachers or tutors, such as La Bruyère, who claimed that what children needed were whips and ferules, that these were the only arguments capable of touching the rebellious nature.”⁸⁹⁴ It is also known that there were teachers who abused punishment, making students abandon school.

It has been said that physical punishments were very common not only at school, but also in the family and in society in general. It should be added: to its highest level. Tarsot recounted that

Dubois, a servant of the first Dauphin,⁸⁹⁵ gave an exact account in his memoirs of the punishments received from his illustrious master under the orders of his tutor, Bossuet: “September 20 (1661), two smacks. September 21, strikes in the morning and afternoon. September 22: strikes in the morning; in the afternoon, no strikes, but we were afraid. September 23 and 24: everything good. But in the morning of the 25th, the Master of Montausier struck him very hard, to the point that his hand swelled up, becoming sore and trembling, and he could neither stop, nor continue with his topic.”⁸⁹⁶

Within this context, how did De La Salle justify the use of punishments? With arguments given by him above all in the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.⁸⁹⁷

The first set of reasons referred to the child himself. Inclined to evil, little capable of reflection, unskilled at governing himself, he was assisted by these measures, because they contributed to making him reflect and show better judgment. Leaving faults unpunished ran the risk of losing him. Left uncorrected, they would be repeated and become enslaving habits. The reason to punish the student for his misdeeds was to cause in him a much greater good than cajoling him with pretty words would.

On the teacher’s part, he was to feel obliged to correct given his position as substitute for the parents and the pastors of the Church, and not to be remiss in carrying out the task that God had honored him with in entrusting to him the education of a group of children. Correction was linked to the zeal that the educator should have for his students. It was one of the forms of expressing it. If he had zeal, it would bring him “to allow nothing in the children under your guidance that could displease God.”⁸⁹⁸ “One of the characteristics and one of the effects of the zeal people have for the well-being and salvation of souls is to reprove and correct those in their care when they fall into some fault.”⁸⁹⁹ “Take care, above all, that it be charity and zeal for the salvation of the souls of your students that leads you to correct them.”⁹⁰⁰

The positive results of good correction were another reason that legitimized it. In effect, if applied well, it would bring the praise of men, the blessings of God, and even the gratitude of those corrected. This statement regarding the blessings of God brings to mind the scriptural foundation to which De La Salle himself appealed. The Bible was not lacking in passages endorsing and even encouraging the use of corrective measures in education: "He who loves instruction [discipline] loves knowledge." "Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die." "The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but the child left to himself brings shame to his mother."⁹⁰¹

Among biblical examples, De La Salle pointed to Eli, whose house God condemned because Eli constantly tolerated the bad behavior of his sons. He recalled the good effects of the moderate (and, the passage says, intelligent) reprimand made by Nathan to David. He saw Jesus Christ rebuking the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and false piety and using a whip against those who were buying and selling in the temple. He cited the case of Saint Paul admonishing the Corinthians and suggesting that Timothy punish those who sinned, because of the force of example of the censure, that is, of the power it had to bring others to avoid the evil condemned.⁹⁰²

Why punish? What effects were especially hoped for from the admonitions, penances, and physical punishments? In a general way, the *Common Rules* and the *Conduct* stated that correction was made such that the student might profit by it. In Anselme's summary, correction practiced in the Lasallian school fulfilled various roles.⁹⁰³

In the first place, it had a medicinal purpose. It is clear that De La Salle, in the *Conduct*, rarely used the words *punishment* and *to punish* (only some five times) while, according to the *Lasallian Vocabulary*, the words *correction* and *to correct* take up almost four pages. This choice is an indication that, for De La Salle, the sanctions used did not aim at avenging justice and the rights of those injured or slighted, and that the, in no way, had as their goal, nor could have, to punish for the displeasure of the teacher by the student's misbehavior, or to discharge the teachers bad humor or rage. Rather, they looked for the student's true conversion: bringing him to awareness and admission of that in his life which was not correct and accepting the penalty as a remedy for being off track. In other words, to be corrected.

Beyond this, its goal was also preventative (to keep the punished student from falling back into his errors), exemplary (to dissuade others from falling under the same sanctions) and reparative (to re-establish the order that was broken). Repair the bad example given. Make satisfaction, before God, for the evil done. Concerning this last end, Lauraire noted that, in the 17th century, "whoever broke the rules placed themselves apart from God, by compromising their own perfection and giving bad example to others."⁹⁰⁴

What should be punished? Poutet and Pungier made a relevant observation on this question: Lasallian correction almost never applied to intellectual failings, but to those of conduct.⁹⁰⁵ With regard to those, some were always to be corrected: lies, fights, theft, lewdness, immodesty in Church.⁹⁰⁶

Whom to punish and whom not to punish? The answer was twofold: on the one hand, there were those who commit the "five vices that [in principle] should never be condoned." On the other, there was the variety of students to keep in mind. Among them were those whom it was better not to punish, or to punish only very rarely, or, at least, not to be quick to do so. In addition to those already mentioned thus far, they were not to punish the very delicate and timid, the slow-witted, or the sick.⁹⁰⁷ Additionally, as will be seen later, children were not to be punished for faults in those cases where their parents should administer the punishment.

In order for correction to be effective, that is, to accomplish these ends, to ensure its positive effects and avoid possibly harmful consequences, it was necessary to take measures for it to be carried out well.⁹⁰⁸ De La Salle indicated the characteristics it should have to be carried out well: it was to be just and appropriate. Just, punishing only those who deserved it and imposing the punishment only for proven guilt. Appropriate, that is, proportional to the nature and seriousness of the fault committed as well as to other factors, particularly the age, temperament and character of the student, or his prior conduct.

Correction should also be useful, according to what was described above in "Effective and Efficient Education."

Likewise, it must be humane and Christian, keeping in mind that it is being applied to a rational being and a faithful Christian. This included making the student see the reason for the punishment given and keeping God in view, that the punishment might please God and asking him to send his Spirit before administering it.

Lastly, it must be as rare as possible:

The Brothers will exercise all possible attention and vigilance over themselves so as not to punish their pupils except rarely, being convinced as they ought to be that this is one of the chief means of managing their school well and of establishing very good order.⁹⁰⁹

One of the signs that the school was functioning well was that it used few punishments.

Parallel to these more objective characteristics required of punishment, De La Salle also cared about the subjective dispositions that should affect those who administered it and those who received it, as well as the way in which the administration and reception of punishment should be made and where it should be carried out.

Concerning the dispositions, the one who administered punishment was asked to do it with a pure intention, that is, not motivated by personal interests, but wanting and seeking only the good of the student. He was asked to be moderate, not rash; firm and mild; in the language of the *Conduct*, “rather less rigorous than more rigorous.”⁹¹⁰ It insisted on him being calm, patient and controlled, that is to say, maintaining his self-control, not getting carried away by emotion, anger, impatience or lack of control. He was urged to act always with precaution and prudence, “so as to do nothing that is inappropriate or that could have evil consequences.”⁹¹¹ Additionally – confirming one of the marks of the Lasallian school – it was hoped that he administer the punishment silently or at least with a low voice.

Requiring correction in order to have a Christian character, it was natural that the teacher be asked to administer it with charity, which meant, among other things, that, in administering it, he never use offensive or discourteous terms and always call the student only by his name.⁹¹²

It bears remembering that, among the punishments then used at schools, some were humiliating, or had as their goal ridiculing the wrongdoers. The bad student, for example, was ordered to kiss the floor, or sit in a place called the donkey seat, dressed in rags, with a broom in his hand and a dunce’s cap on his head, and was made an object of jeering and shouts by the others. A talkative student could have a gag placed across his mouth. De La Salle eliminated many of these kinds of punishments in his school, but not all. He did not, for example get rid of the “Dunce’s Bench”:

Students of any lesson or level who have been examined three times for promotion and have not been promoted because of lack of ability, shall be assigned to a particular bench called the “Dunce’s Bench” and placed in a conspicuous location in the classroom. On the wall behind it, there shall hang a sign reading: “Dunce’s Bench.” Students will remain seated there until capable of being promoted from this lesson or this level.⁹¹³

Among the forms of physical punishment used in the Christian Schools, a teacher was not allowed, in any way, to strike a student with his hand. This was a question of importance to De La Salle. In his letters, he returned to it various times: “For the love of God, do not resort to striking with the hand.” On this point, caution could never be excessive. “It is not by force of blows that we attract people to the good or to God.” Appealing to this recourse would be a great fault on the part of the teacher. It would be shameful.⁹¹⁴ It was also prohibited to strike the student or to hit him with a fist, or foot, or a switch; to shove or push him rudely; to pull him by parts of his body, such as the ears or hair; to throw the ferule or other object at him.⁹¹⁵

To say something about the place in which punishment was administered, an example suffices: “The Brothers will not use the ferule away from their place, except for teachers of writing only during the writing lesson.”⁹¹⁶

All the precautions alluded to refer especially to physical punishments, although a number of them also apply to oral reprimands and penances. But, for the administration of these other penalties, the *Conduct* also gave some specific directions.

Concerning reprimands, inspired by Saint Paul, De La Salle directed that they should be given in a vigorous and firm, if always controlled, way.⁹¹⁷ The penance was to be given with certainty (“with authority”), “the teacher then will in a serious tone pronounce the penance and name the fault for which it is being imposed.”⁹¹⁸ Dismissal, among other things, could only be decided with the agreement of the Director, the only person who had the power to order it.

Concerning the one receiving the punishment, the teacher was to try to have him accept it due to the wrong he had done to himself and his colleagues, by the bad example he gave them. Regarding the manner in which he received the punishment, he was to be respectful and silent.

It has been said that De La Salle's desire was that the number of punishments, particularly corporal, be reduced to the lowest possible number, and he accomplished that. He made physical corrections an extreme measure, difficult to administer, through the practical and detailed precautions he took: he imposed very clear and strict restrictions for their administration.⁹¹⁹ The instruments of correction had to be retained only by those commissioned by the Director to keep them. If the Inspector were in the school, teachers could administer correction with them after having been in contact with him. If he were not, the teachers of the lower classes could not use them before getting approval from the head teacher. The Brothers younger than twenty-one, those over twenty-one but still probationary, and those who were in their first year after the novitiate could not use those instruments without speaking with the Director or with the person to whom he had entrusted the instruments of correction.

In order for punishment to be administered, De La Salle precisely defined numerous conditions and required their verification. Ten in total: seven on the part of the teacher and three on the part of the student. He listed them in the *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, and developed them in detail in the *Conduct* and the *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*.⁹²⁰ In addition to this, he listed the defects to be avoided in punishing, recommending strongly methods that were more efficient than correction in establishing "good order": the teacher's silence, vigilance and moderation; and he called upon the teacher's creativity: "A constant effort must be made to act with skill and ingenuity to keep students in order while making almost no use of correction."⁹²¹

Finally, whenever possible, he extolled the use of alternative means to physical punishment, especially the penances, which "will be much more ordinarily used in the schools than corrections."⁹²²

In sum: De La Salle did not get rid of physical punishment, but he reduced its use as much as possible and, through the precautions he took, he contributed to making school discipline more gentle. According to his principal biographer, the way in which he directed correction and his teachers obeyed his direction made that correction be "more inclined to attract the fondness and affection of the children than to the contrary."⁹²³ Patrice Marey, considering the ways in which the teacher would bring the student to accept the correction and the motivations that inspired him to do this, spoke of true spiritual direction.⁹²⁴

With this, Lasallian teachers achieved surprising results: "Why don't you do what the Brothers do? They don't punish this way," was what a child, crying, said one day to his out-of-control mother who had punished him with kicks and punches.⁹²⁵ "The most surprising thing," according to the same source, was that "the students who seemed most fond of the Brothers were those who were most often corrected, when the corrections were made according to the spirit of the *Rule*."⁹²⁶

Everett concluded that the procedure that De La Salle followed in Chapter 5 of the *Conduct* (which gives direction on correction) "to eliminate physical punishments is probably the most humane and most realistic of those undertaken by educators in 17th-century France ... This chapter is a treasure of pedagogy, a true gem in the history of education."⁹²⁷

By way of complementary historical information, it is also interesting to know what happened in the Lasallian Institute in this regard after De La Salle's death. The *Conduct* of 1720 further reduced physical punishments. Blain observed that already "the Brothers began to make the complete banishment of them from their schools their law."⁹²⁸

In 1777, the General Chapter [of the Institute] prohibited the use of the whip and switches; nonetheless, it kept the ferule, the use of which was ever more limited. Beginning in 1838, recourse to it was very rare. In 1860, it was totally banned. Thus, it took one hundred forty-one years after the death of De La Salle for the Brothers to desist definitively from any allusion to physical punishment in the *Conduct*. As Anselme observed, the measure by which corrections were diminishing was in parallel with the humanizing of the penances and the progressive multiplication of rewards of every type.⁹²⁹

Students with One Another

The *Conduct* did not ignore the difficulties of human co-existence in times of heightened, accepted and encouraged forms of inequality. It spoke of the fights that broke out between students: “The teacher will make them understand that this is one of the most considerable faults they can commit.”⁹³⁰ In the pages following this statement, the Lasallian manual referred to other forms of violence, more verbal than physical.

As Lauraire wrote, such observed realities “reveal the aggression of this class of youth, recently arrived at the academic world, and the difficulties of living in harmony and submitting themselves to the rules of collective life.”⁹³¹ In this profoundly unequal social context, De La Salle asked his followers to teach the children to love one another, as Jesus Christ loves them,⁹³² and to ask at the end of each day: Today, “did I especially love all my colleagues?”⁹³³

In particular, and even more concretely, they were to help the students learn to **communicate with one another** through appropriate expressions, to **relate to one another** with good manners, to **respect one another** and to **accept their differences**, to **serve** freely, to **help one another** and to **share**, above all with those in greater need.

Communication

Into this social and fraternal apprenticeship, entered, in the first place, the mastery of the primary and universal instrument of communication, spoken and written language. In the choice of the language to be mastered by the children of the poor, Furet and Ozouf pointed out – it bears repeating – that De La Salle opted for that which, for the poor, had “social utility,” an instrument of preparation for the work in which they were going to be employed and live with others, for a “secular rooting” in that world. In De La Salle’s writings

in teaching reading, French precedes Latin, because it is the language with social utility; a sign that reading itself ceased to be, for the founder of the Christian Schools, possibly without him realizing it, the privileged knowledge of the Word of God, and became a place of socialization and rooting in the secular world.⁹³⁴

Relationships

Educated in the fine ways of “sons of a good house,” De La Salle assimilated through it and through his formative environment in general the whole secular liturgy that is etiquette, one of the characteristic notes of the *Grand Siècle* of France and of the old pedagogy. One of his democratizing efforts was to socialize the teaching of etiquette, formulating and putting at the disposal of his poor students, normally not habituated to refined speech and gestures, his knowledge and practices of civility and teaching them to his students.

With the *Rules of Decorum*, the Lasallian school was explaining [practices of civility] to its students, in an ordered way, and they were complementing and recalling the elements of good manners already learned by day-to-day practice at school. Learning this, the sons of the poor and the artisans, beyond improving the conditions of life amongst themselves, were equipped to relate in a polished way with people of other levels, without being embarrassed by their own condition. With this progress, undertaken thanks to Christian civility, which De La Salle strove to spread, little by little, the lower ranks of the population could make themselves more esteemed and respected in society.

It is worth recalling that, in addition to the quality of instruction, this learning and progressive practice of good manners and hygiene on the part of the artisans and the poor who attended the Lasallian school were factors contributing to the school being sought, gradually, by a certain number of students belonging to less disadvantaged social classes.

Respect

According to the *Rules of Decorum*, good manners, for the Christian, come down to two things: modesty (a word which at the time meant, among other things, privacy, reserve, moderation, and circumspection, above all with oneself) and respect in dealing with others, respect manifested in acts such as speaking, walking in company,

playing games, visiting, dressing, including style (the most sure and reasonable direction with regard to style: neither be the first to adopt it, nor the last to leave it⁹³⁵).

Thus, in this famous manual of good manners,

we will treat these two separately. In the first part, we examine the modesty that must be shown in the deportment and the care of the body and of the various parts of the body. In the second part, we examine the external marks of respect or special consideration that must be manifested in the various actions of life with regard to all the people in whose presence we may be and with whom we may have to deal.⁹³⁶

While the first part – referring to attention to the body – filled forty-eight pages in the original text, two hundred four pages are dedicated to the second – on the external signs of respect to people.

Just as in chapter thirteen of the *Common Rules*, in speaking of relations amongst the Brothers, the term respect appears seven times, also in the *Rules of Decorum* this word is constantly present, whether to suggest the signs that show it,⁹³⁷ or to warn against attitudes that reveal its absence.⁹³⁸

In summary: “Respect for our neighbor should always be present in our conduct.”⁹³⁹

Living with Differences

Lasallian fraternity also includes living with differences. In the Christian School, in general, this living together was practiced by the fact that in them a majority of poor students interacted with the sons of artisans and the petty bourgeois in the greatest possible conditions of equality. At breakfast and afternoon snack, for example, in order that no one appear superior to the others and no one feel humiliated, it was prohibited to bring food not commonly available to the poor, as will be seen.

A special situation occurred in the boarding house at Saint Yon, mentioned previously. There, people of diverse social levels and fortunes gathered to study. Such differences in level and wealth translated, especially, into different ways of dressing, different categories of food, and differentiated payment of fees (from 100 to 400 *livres*). Nonetheless, there, as well, all lived together and behaved in good understanding and harmony.

Offering Service

The most outstanding form of serving, and of gratuitous service, was the exercise of specified “offices.” In each class, the teacher would designate a significant number of students to carry out various roles or responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities constituted “offices.” Those who carried them out, similar to what happened outside of school, were called “officers”: “There will be several officers in the school. These officers will be charged with several different functions which teachers cannot or ought not do themselves.”⁹⁴⁰

Which were the functions that “they should not perform”? From the context of the *Conduct*, we can propose that the teacher was not to do anything that the student is able to do.

The creation and functioning of the system of offices was neither invented by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, nor was it unique to the *Conduct*. It pre-existed them, published in other texts and practiced in other institutions. For example, in the book *The Parish School* and in Jesuit schools, or those of Father Barré.

Among other things, what is seen in the Lasallian schools regarding this practice is the special care given to selecting the officers. In the *Conduct*, norms were established for identifying them and the qualities that each should have, according to the nature of the office to be carried out. In general, these functions were entrusted to those who distinguished themselves by exactitude in fulfilling their duties, by application in their work, and by marks of character. However, they could also be assigned as a disciplinary strategy, that is, with the expectation that the confidence shown to the student by the assignment and the responsibility given to him would lead him to improve his behavior. Thus, an office could be assigned to the so-called libertines, so that they might come to like school better; to the frequently absent, to help them become dedicated to attendance; to the ill-mannered and arrogant, judged capable, to incorporate them and also build their affection for school.⁹⁴¹

Some offices were assigned to two students at once. The officers received their appointment at the beginning of the year and for designated terms. The Inspector of Schools was responsible for making sure they fulfilled their tasks exactly. In twenty-five pages, the *Conduct* described in great detail the functions and tasks of each “officer.”

As will become clear in the summary description that follows, of the various “offices” in use in the Lasallian school, the exercise of the function of “officer,” along with practicing the habit of being concerned with others and the service by one student of another or to the entire class, and of contributing to the creation and maintenance of a family atmosphere in the school, also accomplished other educational tasks. It caused numerous students to participate actively in the life of the school. It taught responsibility and initiative, an aspect commented on elsewhere. It contributed to the good progress of the whole institution. It helped the teacher, allowing him a kind of extension of himself. It contributed to the student growing in a sense of belonging, to help him feel more that the school was his. In addition to showing the solidarity that pervaded the Christian School, it was yet one more practice revealing the day-to-day life of the school, the pedagogical-disciplinary routines used in it, as well as its already noted strong religious mark.

Finally, carrying out these functions constituted, simultaneously and paradoxically, a preparation for the society in which the Lasallian students were going to live and a challenge against aspects present in that society. As is known, in those times of belief in inequality, of social stability, and of privilege, the living together practiced and the types of service offered by the various offices exercised in the Christian Schools and the way of carrying them out were not exactly what the students would later encounter in the society of the *Ancien Régime*.

Thus, the offices were not assigned to the student based on his birth, social or economic status, but according to his knowledge, his good behavior, and the personal qualities required by them. As in the new world of the bourgeoisie that was getting established, as well as to be able to carry them out did not require blood, birth or “quality” of origins, but merit. Beyond this, the exercise of these functions was not “for life,” as was the reigning monarchy, but an assignment that could be taken away. It was necessary to continue being worthy of them to remain in the assignment. “To punish those officers who have not carried out their offices, they can be removed from them for several days,”⁹⁴² and, eventually, even definitively. Finally, these functions were not anyone’s privilege; in them, great mobility took place, with periodic rotation of assignments.

To this it is necessary to add that the Lasallian social educational sense did not show itself only in the offices adopted and used in the school. It was also seen in what De La Salle rejected in this regard. For example, among the offices, he did not adopt that of “Emperor,” often used by other educators of the time.

Such offices could be grouped in various ways, depending on the point of reference taken: offices of service more to the teacher or more to the students; offices carried out more in school, or in Church, or in the neighborhood; offices of a more religious, intellectual, social, charitable, material nature, or of control. What were these offices? Several have already been mentioned. The *Conduct* sets out fourteen, but, throughout that Lasallian text and others, other offices are listed without specific designation.

The Reciter of Prayers presided over, that is, began, each of the prayers said in class.

The Holy Water Carrier presented students with holy water when they entered the Church, rang the bell at the consecration [of the Mass] and, along with the Rosary Carriers, were in position to lead the lines when the students went to Church.

The Rosary Carriers and his aides distributed rosaries in Church to children who did not yet know how to read; collected them at the end of the liturgy, making sure all were returned; carried the basket in which were placed the blessed bread distributed at Mass; and were attentive to the behavior of the pair of students charged, on a rotating basis, with praying the rosary in the classroom.

The Bell Ringer indicated the beginning and end of school exercises.

The Monitor was charged with supervising students in the teacher’s absence. For example, in the half hour that preceded his arrival in the classroom, but when the students were already present. He neither spoke nor gave warnings; he merely watched attentively what happened and later informed the teacher how things had gone, no more, no less.

The Supervisors were two students, unknown to the Monitor, who observed his behavior to see if he carried out his function and did not let himself be bribed, for example, by gifts.

The Distributors and Collectors of Papers (the Writing Officers) handed out sheets of paper at the beginning of the writing lesson and collected them at the end; made sure that every student had blotting paper; watched how they wrote; and cleaned the inkwells once a week.

The Sweepers devoted themselves to cleaning the room, sweeping it daily.

The Doorkeeper opened and closed the door each time someone entered and left and – one at a time – handed out the pass that students took to the hygiene facilities.

The Keeper of the School Key kept the key to the school when the school was not attached to the Brothers' house. He opened the door in the morning and the afternoon. He made sure nothing was taken from the classroom.

When the students do not return to the school after holy Mass, the Keeper of the School Key will return with the Rosary Carrier, the Holy Water Bearer, and the Sweepers, and will see that the latter make no noise while they are sweeping. The Keeper of the School Key will not leave before the others do.⁹⁴³

The Mass Officer played the role of priest when, in the classroom, colleagues practiced how to assist at the liturgical celebration.

The Almoner, already mentioned, will be the object of later analysis.

The First Student in the Bench noted the name of absent colleagues from his bench. This office was a reward given to the students who were most modest (pious, well behaved), most regular in attendance and most capable.

The Visitors of the Absent Students were two or three students charged, in a general sense, with checking on and encouraging the attendance of students in designated geographic areas. In particular, they noted the absence of colleagues from the area assigned to them. They went to the house of absent students, to find out why they were not in class. The following day, they would inform the teacher of the result of their investigation: with whom they had spoken; the reasons for the absence; and when the absent students would return to school.

The Distributor and Collector of Books handed out to the poorest students the books that were kept for this purpose in a cabinet in the room and, at the end of the lesson, collected them, making sure they had not been damaged.

As said, scattered throughout various parts of the *Conduct* and also in other texts, there were still other functions carried out by students that did not fall into these fourteen offices.

Leaders of Song. In leaving the classroom in the afternoon, two students sang alternating verses of a song, each of which was repeated by the students.⁹⁴⁴

Aide Memoire. Since punishment was prohibited during the catechism and prayers, if someone committed some fault during that time, the teacher whispered the name of another “faithful” student (that is, with a good memory) to remind him later, at a specified time.⁹⁴⁵

Observer of Completion of Penance. If the teacher ordered a penance to be completed later, he charged students to make sure it was completed. For example, if one student received the penance of not playing for three days, “various others were responsible for observing him to make sure he actually did not play.”⁹⁴⁶

The tasks that could be distributed do not end here. The teacher could charge a student with being a liaison between the school and the parish to ask, for example, that Mass be begun earlier or later; and another, to help collect objects contrary to the good conduct of the class.⁹⁴⁷

Some of these tasks signified the exercise of true power, of delegated authority, such as that of taking away things that students were playing with during class or that were not needed for the lesson and giving them to the teacher at the end of the lesson, or likewise the Keeper of the School Key, returning, with the Sweepers, from Mass to the school, to make sure they did not make noise while carrying out their job.⁹⁴⁸

As in this last case, many of the tasks assigned were of the nature of oversight: before opening the door for students to enter the classroom, a student carried out the task of noting who was making noise in arriving, that is, in the street. Some students had the mission of observing what their colleagues did in specified blocks and streets near the school, and of informing the teacher of what they saw.⁹⁴⁹

Mutual Assistance and Charity

Social sense and Christian fraternity are moreover exercises in the Lasallian school through various and frequent forms of mutual assistance and charity. The case, perhaps, to which most attention is called in this area was the exercise of the function of visiting the sick, a function carried out by the same students who visited absentees:

From time to time, the Visitors shall call on the sick students from the area for which they have been given charge. They shall do this according to the instructions given them by the teacher and even on their own initiative. During the visit, they shall console the absentees and urge them to suffer their illness patiently for the love of God. They shall then inform the teacher of how the sick are, and whether they are getting any better.⁹⁵⁰

Anselme commented that “this practice of the old school” was “truly touching, and shows the affection the students had for each other and that the teacher had for them.”⁹⁵¹

Another office along these lines was that of the First Student in the Bench. In addition to the function, already indicated, of noting absent bench members, this officer exercised a type of warning: he served as a model to his bench colleagues and guided them in completing their exercises.

Still from the perspective of mutual help through modeling, specified content was repeated if a student was not able to master it the first time. For this, the teacher appealed to the assistance of other students and only intervened personally when none of them were able to give the correct response.

It is not excessive to call attention to the final part of the previous observation. In this case, as in others that could be listed, it is the student who made the correction. The teacher only intervened to say the correct form if it was absolutely necessary. If during catechism,

the teacher notes that several in succession cannot answer a question or do not do it well, the teacher may call upon one or several out of the regular order and in different parts of the class ... After one or several have answered, the one upon whom the teacher had called before in the regular order will again be called upon.⁹⁵²

And in learning reading, “when a student does not know how to read a letter, the teacher will point to another student who knows well how to do it.”⁹⁵³

The idea of a student helping a colleague as a model was intelligently and amply explored. It was, for example, one of the elements that could determine the placement of students in the classroom. Thus, a stronger student was placed next to a weaker one, or an older next to a younger, so that he could teach him to follow easily.⁹⁵⁴ In writing, the teacher

will also take care to place students so as to put, as much as possible, a beginner of a given level of writing next to another student who is already mastering it, or one who is in the next highest level; a student who has difficulty in making the motions with one who does them easily; one who has trouble maintaining the correct body and pen positions with another who maintains them both well; and thus, others, so that the weaker can learn from observing the others.⁹⁵⁵

In reading:

As soon as any students begin this lesson and in order that they may accustom themselves to read their own book while the others are reading, the teacher will take care to assign to each one, for as many days as assistance may be needed, a companion who, when the others are reading, will teach the new student how to

follow the lesson and they will follow together in the same book: both will hold the book one on one side and the other on the other.⁹⁵⁶

This is an opportune moment to turn to the case of students who, even though in a position to be promoted to the next lesson, agreed to delay their promotion to stay and help their weaker colleagues. For Lauraire, this voluntary delay of students to serve as “promoters of the group,” and to infuse the group with “modeling and dynamism, as generators of progress,” was a “limited case of solidarity,”⁹⁵⁷ which helps explain the *Conduct’s* recommendation that such delay in promotion never be made without the consent of the student: “The Inspector, however, will be very careful to only keep a student in a position to be promoted in a lesson or level of lesson if the student is very happy to do so.”⁹⁵⁸

Another way for a student to help another was by pointing to something to show it to him. This happened in the mornings, “from the time of entering the school until the arrival of the teachers” that is, during the half hour “a student in the first class will be charged by the teacher to point out on the two charts of the alphabet and of the syllables first one letter or syllable and then another, in different sequences.” In the place of the teacher and acting as him, he first had the most capable little children read and then had the others repeat, such that, the students who are learning them may thus study their lessons.⁹⁵⁹

Collaboration was also seen when, during breakfast and afternoon snack, one student said the names of the prayers and the other recited them; one asked questions from the catechism and the other responded to them; one said the parts of the priest at Mass and the other said the altar server’s parts.⁹⁶⁰

The same exercise with the catechism was repeated on Sunday afternoons when the students came half an hour before the beginning of class (that is, before the teacher came for the class on Christian doctrine).

While they are assembling, they will question one another in pairs on the diocesan catechism, as in the repetition during breakfast and the afternoon snack. The teacher will indicate those who are to question one another and repeat the catechism at this time.⁹⁶¹

As has just been seen, what was practiced in the Lasallian schools was the participation of the most advanced student collaborating in the instruction of the lower level, above all serving as a model for them and helping them in the correction of errors.

Thus, as in other practices, some forms of mutual assistance between Lasallian students bring to mind the mutual mode of instruction. Poutet went so far as to say that “one of the merits of mutual instruction is that of re-encountering – or believing him to have invented entirely – certain values that John Baptist de La Salle tried to safeguard in drafting the *Conduct of the Christian Schools*.”⁹⁶²

Sharing

According to the custom equally present in other schools, in De La Salle’s schools breakfast and afternoon snack were eaten in the classroom. The reasons for this have been noted several times: fundamentally, so that the students could learn to eat in a “Christian and educated” way.⁹⁶³ The *Conduct* would add: if people wanted the students to eat at school it was also necessary to educate those of greater means in sharing their excess with the poorer, to turn their excess into community property.

In each class, a student [the Almoner] shall be appointed to gather the alms, that is, the bread to be given to the poor during the breakfast and the afternoon snack.

About halfway through both breakfast and the afternoon snack and again at the end, and after bowing to the teacher, this official shall take the basket destined for this purpose and pass it in front of the benches. The Almoner shall pass the basket first on one side of the class. The Almoner shall then pass it on the other side. This shall be done without saying a single word and while being very careful never to ask any food of any particular student.

When walking about the classroom during this task, the Almoner shall act with self-control and without noise. The Almoner shall be careful never to stare at anyone.⁹⁶⁴

However, the text printed in 1720 added: “At the end of the meal, the teacher will distribute the bread to the poorest and will exhort them to pray to God for their benefactors.”⁹⁶⁵

Their benefactors? Who? A rich neighbor? A woman of charity? No. A colleague, somewhat less poor, at least on that day. Note that this act of generous sharing which the students were asked to do was a totally spontaneous gesture. “They may place the bread” in the basket. “Without compelling them to do so.” “This is done entirely freely.”⁹⁶⁶

A detail to note on the last point: to those who wanted to share, the teacher “will not let them bring meat.”⁹⁶⁷ In the interpretation of Poutet and Pungier, “so that no one make himself superior to the others and no one felt humiliated.”⁹⁶⁸ According to Lauraire’s reading, “to not embarrass those who did not have the means to be able to eat it.”⁹⁶⁹ And if someone came with it? “The teacher will have it given to the poorest students, those who certainly do not get to eat it at home.”⁹⁷⁰

Assessment by Historians of Education

The historians of education give very different weight to the various points raised in this chapter on Lasallian education. Few highlight the liveliness of the brotherhood within the classroom through the affection shown by teachers for their students, and of the practices of mutual assistance, charity, and sharing amongst students. The activity of students in the classroom through the exercise of offices receives greater emphasis. A good number of authors relate such exercises with the mutual mode of instruction, a mode that some see as a return to De La Salle, along the same lines as Poutet.

The mutual mode of instruction, presented in the 19th century in opposition to the simultaneous mode, resembles greatly that of the Brothers. In it, one finds simultaneous teaching, division of classes into groups by levels for each subject, a quasi-military system of warning and discipline.⁹⁷¹

The legitimists criticized mutual instruction: they saw in it the constitutional regime introduced into education. But, this abominable, impious method, comes to us from the pious founder of the Christian Schools..., and this novelty is 150 years old.⁹⁷²

Not a few authors have strong reservations or heavy criticisms against the existence and the work of the Monitors and Supervisors, the second being, in truth, a counter-monitor. Anselme wrote, “This system of inspection and counter-inspection does not, perhaps, please many modern pedagogues.” He suggested, however, “But it would be difficult to avoid it in a school as heavily populated as that for which the *Conduct* was written.”⁹⁷³ The opponents of these offices, however, do not see educational benefits to them, do not accept their alleged goal of helping with the good order of the school. They consider them to be informing, pure and simple, obligating the students charged with these offices to report systematically and faithfully their observations to the teacher.

Regarding physical punishment, the authors report the range of corrective measures given in the *Conduct* (verbal, penance, physical punishment and dismissal) and give their opinions on them. They say that, on this point, De La Salle did not rise above the tendencies of his era, that is, that he allowed the use of such punishment, considering it legitimate and necessary. They state that he wanted it to be rational, brief and, above all, rare; that he regulated with precision the conditions and circumstances in which it could be administered. They indicate that he tried to limit its use. Lastly, they recognize that, despite not being able to abolish it, he contributed to it being made less severe.

This practice, habitual in that era, is certainly the most censured by authors. The length at which De La Salle, above all in the *Conduct*, dealt with this theme is interpreted by not a few as proof that he and his teachers were obsessed with corporal punishment. They reach this conclusion without keeping sufficiently in mind the context

of that practice and without knowing how far the Brothers were from condoning the educational climate in which it was developed.

Even among those who indicate De La Salle's effort to limit the use of physical punishment, not all see – or at least, they do not stress – sufficiently that effort, including his work to eliminate it. Regarding this, Everett recalled that Blain reported that De La Salle, despite his efforts, did not achieve that elimination, “because the teachers were not inclined to allow it.”⁹⁷⁴ The same author imagines the chapter of the *Conduct* on physical punishments as a “dramatic dialogue” between De La Salle and his teachers: them demanding rigorous punishments, to guarantee their security and authority in the classroom, and him insisting on moderation in the use of this means and, even, on its exclusion.



The Lasallian school maintained independence from an administrative and pedagogical perspective. It did not, however, want to be an island: it was open to **society**, the **Church** and the **family**.

Openness to Society

One of the scholars of De La Salle, on the one hand, stated that “patriotism was strong” in De La Salle’s family, but, on the other hand, wrote that De La Salle did not insist on the obligations of the “subject” toward the king, either in *Duties of a Christian* or in *Rules of Decorum*, nor in the *Meditations* on teaching, that is *for the Time of Retreat*.⁹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, he knew the reality of the society of his time, from that of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie, in which he had moved especially at the beginning of his life, to that of poverty, to which he later committed himself. Beyond merely being aware of it, he showed, in the *Rules of Decorum*, that he knew that it was necessary to carry oneself according to the times, places and social conditions of level.

In the cities where De La Salle and his Brothers took on schools, the initiative to ask for the Lasallian presence frequently came from one person. In many places, however, that request came from public authorities, who effectively favored the maintenance and development of the Christian Schools until the French Revolution. In the places where that happened, “the teaching of the Brothers was considered not only as an ecclesial service, or a form of gratuitous assistance to the poor, but as participation in the life of the city. More than parochial, the Christian School was, in them, gratuitous, communal, and public.”⁹⁷⁶

In these instructional structures financed by public power, in the same way as has been seen in all the other Lasallian schools, education always included specific preparation for civil society, for the life of the citizen, through learning secular knowledge, development of good manners and concern for the assimilation of the foundations, if not the practices, of a professional character.

De La Salle did not fall short in the assistance he gave to those who, due to their delinquent conduct, were undesirable in society, such that they were saved from it by the corrective work undertaken at Saint Yon. Blain, an eye witness, attested to that work, saying that numerous inmates

returned to their houses, showing in their orderly life, that they had left Saint Yon very different from when they had entered it. The majority of those educated there, honored that house and gave, with the example of their lives, proof of the good education they received there.⁹⁷⁷

The *Conduct* did not speak very explicitly about the Christian School’s relationship with society and of the service it offered to it. It presented, nonetheless, significant evidence of openness to that surrounding society and of attention to what happened in it.

Thus, in addition to allowing entrance to individual teachers who wanted to learn how classes were taught in a Christian School, the school was always open to the public authorities who wanted to visit.⁹⁷⁸ The school took a holiday on the days on which a ceremony or something extraordinary was happening in the city, on the condition that it not be dangerous or prejudicial to the students. In the same way, it did not hold class on the days of certain

feasts, even though they were not [religiously] obligatory, because they were celebrated in the city. The students were also given a holiday to attend fairs when they did not last longer than one day.⁹⁷⁹ Students were authorized to be absent from school for the patronal feast of their parents' profession, if their parents exercised a trade.

At least three additional examples can be added to these illustrations of De La Salle's attention to the realities of the civic community in general and the local communities in particular, realities that differed significantly in the various regions of France.

First: In the article of the *Conduct* that deals with "prayers not to be said daily at school," it prescribed that no prayer other than those listed would be prayed. It allowed only two exceptions; according to the first:

In case of some public necessity or for some other occasion which concerns the needs of the Institute, the Superior may add the litany of the Blessed Virgin or some other short prayer at the end of prayers, and for a specified time only.⁹⁸⁰

Second: The great majority of books used in the various levels of learning to read were the same in all Lasallian schools, but at least one of them was to be chosen locally: "The third reader which will be used to teach reading in the Christian Schools will be one upon which the Directors in each place and the Superior of the Institute will agree."⁹⁸¹

Third: The founder's concern with establishing a novitiate in Marseille, with the goal of forming teachers who mastered the local language and were within the customs of Provence. Writing to Brother Gabriel Drolin, he informed him of his motive for not sending him, in the short term, a new companion in life and work:⁹⁸²

It will be difficult for me to send you a Brother before I have begun a novitiate in this area, which I am going to establish there immediately, because we need men from this region on account of the difference between the language here and that of France.⁹⁸³

Openness to the Church

It is already known that De La Salle lived at a time at once difficult and very rich in the Church in France. Difficult, due to questions of doctrine (Protestantism, Jansenism and Molinism), of spirituality (Quietism) and of relationship with Rome (Gallicanism). Rich, for the pastoral and spiritual renewal underway, for the resurgence created by the Council of Trent and by the action of pastors who knew how to connect deep spirituality with an ardent apostolic zeal.

De La Salle knew perfectly the history, the doctrine and the legislation of his Church. Legislation, for example, which gave to the pastors the right to have their own school for the instruction of the children of their parish; legislation on which he relied in order to help Nyel find someone – the pastor of Saint Maurice – to open his first school destined for the poor children of Rheims.

In the midst of the "calamitous times" of which he speaks in his *Testament*, he always distinguished himself by absolute fidelity to the doctrine and directives of the Church of Rome, faithfulness that he asked of his followers throughout his life, to the end in recording, in his *Testament*, his final wishes. As Christian and priest, he hoped that he had served the Church as effectively as possible.⁹⁸⁴

It is true that De La Salle suffered at the hands of members of the clergy and the hierarchy, but he never disrespected them. He merely showed himself firm in defense of the identifying features of the religious congregation and pedagogical work that, with his co-founders, he had begun. On the one hand, he showed himself faithful and of service to the Church, and, on the other, he always wanted the service that he and the members of his congregation offered to be given "according to the gift that is yours,"⁹⁸⁵ that is, according to their specific charism. When, for example, his friend, Godet de Marais, bishop of Chartres, invited him to take over the schools in his diocese, he accepted willingly. Why? Because the request of the bishop, among other things, corresponded to his desire "to serve the Church in that which was in agreement with his vocation."⁹⁸⁶

The biographers as well as the *Conduct* and other Lasallian texts were richer and more varied when they referred to the relationship between Lasallian education and the Church and the openness of De La Salle's schools to the Church than when they referred to the schools' openness to civil society.

According to them, De La Salle's school, in his vision, was the pastoral instrument of the Church. His teachers received a delegated mission; they were ministers of the Church.⁹⁸⁷ As such, they exercised a prophetic, royal and priestly function. Prophetic, announcing the Christian truth. Royal, being architects of the Church, laying its foundations by cultivating the living rocks that would construct it, by preparing its future active members. Priestly, sanctifying these members with the Word of Life.⁹⁸⁸

In practical terms, in the beginning De La Salle requested from members of the Church (bishops and priests) many of the schools he took over. While setting up a ministry corresponding to his own interest, he tried to establish it always according to ecclesiastical authority, as when he thought of transferring the novitiate from Paris to Saint Yon, in Rouen. "As he was a very hierarchical man, and looked upon his superiors as oracles that pronounced the will of God, he only wanted to make his decision after having written to Msgr. Colbert to know his thinking on the project."⁹⁸⁹ In a similar way, as Blain informed us, he said Mass at home once the chapel there was approved by the ecclesiastical authorities. When his teachers went to a new place, such as Bologne, Avignon, Rouen, etc., to begin a new ministry, they systematically presented themselves to the bishop, to greet him, obtain his authorization to teach Christian doctrine, and to receive his blessing.⁹⁹⁰

The *Common Rules* state that the Christian School was to be open to any ecclesiastical officials who were interested in visiting it.⁹⁹¹ The *Conduct* established that the schools in every location were to try to have the students hear Mass every day, in the nearest Church and at the most convenient time.⁹⁹²

This prescription recalls that this Lasallian administrative-teaching manual explicitly encouraged the development, in the Brothers' students, of an intense liturgical and parochial spirit: "Teachers will inspire the students with a great respect and affection for the offices of the Church, especially for those which are celebrated in their own parishes."⁹⁹³

In recommending the cultivation of that esteem, the *Conduct* confirmed and reinforced what De La Salle himself taught in his catechisms. For example, in the *Duties of a Christian*, in the questions and responses teaching about prayer, the following illuminating dialogue was established between teacher and students:

Q. How many kinds of vocal prayers are there?

A. The two kinds are public prayers and private prayers.

Q. What are public prayers?

A. Public prayers are those all Christians recite together in Churches, for example, holy Mass, the Divine Office, hymns of praise and thanksgiving, and so on.

Q. What are private prayers?

A. Private prayers are those the faithful individually offer in private.

Q. Must we attend public prayers?

A. Yes, as members of a body, the Church, we must participate in everything that concerns her and join with the other members in asking God for our common needs.

Q. Is public or private prayer more agreeable to God?

A. Ordinarily, common, or public, prayer pleases God more.

Q. What advantages do public prayers have over private prayers?

A. There are four main advantages: 1) they are prescribed by the Holy Spirit, who governs the Church; 2) they are occasions when Jesus Christ is often, even usually, with us because he promised to be in the midst of those who gather in his name; 3) they are the prayers by which we more easily receive what we ask for; 4) they enable us to share in the merits of all the others who pray with us.⁹⁹⁴

In function of this, the *Conduct* established that, on catechetical Sundays, the students would be taken to Vespers, with the recommendation that they attend them preferably at the parish:

Students will be taken to the parish Mass when this can be easily done. They will also be taken to the nearest and most convenient Church for Vespers after catechism on Sundays and holy days of obligation.⁹⁹⁵

So important was this presence at the parish liturgical events that it was placed as a requirement for attending the Christian School. In fact, among the “things to communicate to the parents” at the time of enrollment, was this explanation:

No student shall be accepted who is unwilling to attend Church on Sundays and feasts with the teacher and the other students or to assist at the catechism lesson. Students who regularly do not attend shall be sent home.⁹⁹⁶

Attendance at the liturgical offices was not only prescribed for class time. It was recommended likewise during the holiday period. Amongst the principal recommendations that the teacher made to the students about how to spend their holidays was “to assist at holy Mass and Vespers in their parish Churches on Sundays and holy days of obligation.”⁹⁹⁷

It is important to remember that Mass as well as Vespers were prayed and sung in Latin. In the Lasallian school, students, after mastering reading the vernacular, also learned Latin. Why was it learned? So they could say correctly the Psalms at Vespers, for example, and the parts of the Mass that belonged to the altar servers.

But there is still more evidence of how De La Salle and his followers initiated their students into the community of the parish Church. They were given a holiday on the feast day of the patron saint of the parish where the school was located. Class was not held on certain feasts, even when they were not [religiously] obligatory, but were celebrated in the parishes in which one of the Institute’s schools was located. Students coming from a different parish could be authorized to miss class on the feast day of the patron saint of that parish, in the case of that feast being solemnly commemorated. Likewise, they could be absent with permission from school to attend the procession of the Blessed Sacrament when it took place in their parish on a class day.⁹⁹⁸

Another significant indication of the Lasallian school’s openness to the Church and of its willingness to collaborate with its pastoral intentions and action was the fact already mentioned of gathering, on Sundays, students from the parish, only on this day, to attend catechism. The 1706 manuscript of the *Conduct* spent more than a page speaking of this openness and service to the Church.⁹⁹⁹ The edition printed in 1720 maintained this theme, reducing it, however, to a single short paragraph dedicated to it: “Students who do not regularly attend the school may be admitted to the catechism provided they cause no disorder.”¹⁰⁰⁰

Still with regard to the parishes, it should be remembered also that another educational service offered by De La Salle to the Church was the preparation of teachers for rural areas, preparation that included formation so that they would be able to help the local clergy as needed.

In his educational activity, De La Salle also had in mind the diocesan reality. It is known that, in addition to the particular method used in catechesis in all of his schools, he also wrote his own catechisms. With at least one, he contributed to improving catechesis in the various dioceses with which he was called to collaborate, but he always took care not to fail to have his students also learn the catechisms prescribed by the dioceses themselves.¹⁰⁰¹

Finally, there were several directives that address practices relative to both the parish and the diocese, such as when the *Conduct* prescribed that during the whole time that the students are in the Church, at parish Mass and at Vespers, they were to remain seated, standing, or kneeling, according to the custom of the diocese or parish.¹⁰⁰²

Openness to the Family

The Parents of the Lasallian School

De La Salle knew and taught that “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.”¹⁰⁰³

In the language of his time, assimilated by the founder, this fundamentally meant to catechize them, but also to form them in other aspects of life. But the zealous priest of Rheims observed that the fathers and mothers of the poor and the artisans neither accomplished nor could accomplish that mission.

First, they did not educate them; they could not educate their children personally:

Consider that it is a practice only too common for working people and the poor to allow their children to live on their own, roaming all over like vagabonds, as long as they are unable to put them to some work. These parents have no concern to send their children to school, because their poverty does not allow them to pay teachers, or else, obliged as they are to look for work outside the home, they have to abandon their children to fend for themselves.¹⁰⁰⁴

Second, they neither instructed them nor could instruct them in Christian doctrine, because they were ignorant of religion: “At times you may have to teach children who do not know God, because they have been brought up by parents who do not know God.”¹⁰⁰⁵ Ordinarily, they had received little instruction on religious questions.

What were the consequences of this? For De La Salle, they became orphans of living parents, at least “for the salvation of their souls”: “You ought to look upon the children whom you are appointed to teach as poor, abandoned orphans. Although the majority of them do have a father here on earth, they are still as if they had none.”¹⁰⁰⁶

Beyond the parents not instructing or educating them due to their ignorance and lack of time, and not sending them to school for lack of resources, the founder of the Christian Schools also claimed that they did not do it because they were not aware of the importance of education and instruction and of the harm they caused their children by not having them learn to read, to write, to do math, good manners, and things relevant for salvation.¹⁰⁰⁷

Completing the reasons why the children of the poor and the artisans were accustomed to not going to school, the Lasallian text recognized the reality of those who, for some reason, needed them with them and admitted that such a reason could be “good and valid.”¹⁰⁰⁸

On the issue of the problem created by the parents for attending school, De La Salle, with the contribution of his followers, was also aware of and recorded questions relative to the relationship of the parents with the children and their repercussions on their school life. What did they find? That there were parents wanting good for their children, but in an inappropriate way. Thus, in the record of the qualities and defects of a student, something strange in today’s language was to be noted: if the child “is not excessively loved by his parents.”¹⁰⁰⁹

In parallel, De La Salle stated that some parents gave little importance to their children’s progress. In classifying the types of students as a function of the type of correction to use with them, he wrote:

There are some children to whose conduct their parents pay very little attention, sometimes none at all. From morning until evening, they do only what they please. They have no respect for their parents. They are disobedient. They grumble at the least thing. Sometimes these faults do not come from an evil disposition of heart or mind; they come from their having been left to themselves.¹⁰¹⁰

He observed, moreover, that others had no limits in condescension with their children:

There are some parents whose manner of bringing up their children is to give them all that they ask. They never contradict or oppose them in anything, and they almost never correct them for their faults. It seems that they fear to cause them pain, and so they cannot suffer that the least correction be administered to them.¹⁰¹¹

There was one last line in the sketch he made of the parents who relied on and resorted to his school: it was their negligence of their own children's cleanliness.¹⁰¹²

Parent-Child Relationship in the Lasallian Vision and Practice

What precedes records several elements of the familiar reality observed and recorded in the *Conduct* to direct Lasallian teachers in dealing with students and their parents.

De La Salle also spoke of the parents and children in other texts beyond the *Conduct* to recall the **duties that they owe one another**. First, **the duties of children** to their parents.

The *Rules of Decorum*, their author presented as containing “all the duties of children both toward God and toward their parents.”¹⁰¹³

In his catechisms, he taught that the children had five duties to their parents: “They should love them, respect them, obey them, assist them during life, and pray and cause others to pray for them after their death.”¹⁰¹⁴ Regarding these duties, De La Salle, in his *Meditations*, reminded his teachers of the necessity of educating their students in respect, in love, and in obedience: “The second account you must give will have to do with ... whether they respect their parents.” “Do not forget to help them acquire ... love and respect for their parents.” “Let your first attention be given especially to inspire them with a horror for ... lack of respect for their parents.”¹⁰¹⁵

In the examination of conscience made with the students at the end of the day, they were invited to ask themselves: “Have I shown a lack of respect toward my parents? ... Have I disobeyed them?” “Did I skip school without permission, against the wishes of my parents?”¹⁰¹⁶

In the Lasallian school, students were not simply instructed on the fifth duty to their parents. This duty was carefully cultivated each day; every morning and every afternoon, the children prayed for their parents.¹⁰¹⁷

To all of this could be added the duty implicit in all the others, that is, of not offending their parents. A thing that would happen, for example, with students left to their own resources and not corrected for their faults.¹⁰¹⁸

The Lasallian catechism also developed in detail the **duties of the parents** to their children. Essentially, they owed them four things: “food, instruction, correction, and good example.”¹⁰¹⁹

It is interesting and even surprising¹⁰²⁰ to discover that, for the founder of the Christian Schools, feeding, *nourrir*, included more than food and clothing:

They must feed them, clothe them, and bring them up in line with their social condition. They should make them learn a trade or obtain for them some honest type of employment.¹⁰²¹

As has already been noted, to instruct included teaching the contents of the catechism (the mysteries, commandments, introduction to prayer, etc.).¹⁰²² It also included helping the student discover his own state of life – an aspect that merits further attention.¹⁰²³

The catechisms also spoke of “educating [children] in a Christian way,” also expressed as educating them “in the fear and love of God,” and which meant “1) instruct them, 2) correct them, and 3) make them live like good Christians.”¹⁰²⁴

The Lasallian School and the Parents

It is useful to know that, similar to what was said about exams in primary school in the 17th century and the relationship between teacher and student, at this time also there was no properly legislative code that regulated or gave direction regarding the nature and extent of educational relationships between teachers and parents. Thus, it is even more interesting to observe the nature and extent of relationships between the school and the family that De La Salle established in his texts, especially in the *Conduct*.

To begin, De La Salle identified the parents as the ones primarily responsible for the education and instruction of their children, with everything that the terms education and instruction encompassed in meaning in the context of the time.¹⁰²⁵ He saw them as entrusting their children to teachers who could offer them what they themselves were not in a position to give them: “You must, then, regard your work, which has been entrusted to you by pastors and by fathers and mothers, as one of the most important and necessary services in the Church.”¹⁰²⁶

This fact did not mean that the parents abdicated one of their essential responsibilities. The teachers, in relationship with them, exercised a supplementary function, not a substitution.¹⁰²⁷ What De La Salle attempted was not to “absorb the educational function of the parents, but to ensure that it be present where they cannot exercise it.”¹⁰²⁸

A prosaic example of this Lasallian conviction that the parents should not abdicate that which fell to them by right and duty was the direction that the *Conduct* gave the teacher in telling him: “If it is parents who come to accuse their children and say that they should be corrected, ... [if] the fault deserves correction, the parents must be given to understand that they should correct their children themselves.”¹⁰²⁹

In the practical realm, the first observation must be that De La Salle and his teachers tried to maintain contact and dialogue between the school and the family. This contact and dialogue began at enrollment, where the presence of the parents was essential.

The Director shall not enroll any child in the school who is not brought by father or mother, by the person with whom the child lives, by some relative, or by some person of suitable age who comes in the name of the parents.¹⁰³⁰

During enrollment, the family provided identifying data, first about itself, particularly about the parents: name, profession, address, with street and floor, and parish.

Afterwards, the parents would give details describing their son: physical aspects (illnesses or disorders), intellectual (prior schooling in a Brothers’ school or another school, reading ability, writing, etc.); religious (reception of the sacraments) and psycho-moral (good and bad qualities); and future profession (their intention concerning the son’s future work).

In this opportunity of enrolling the student, the Lasallian school, for its part, made clear to the parents “what was expected” to attend the school, such as: those who had the means were to come with the necessary books; not to bring money with them; leave any other school or prior teacher, etc. At the same time, the school invited dialogue. In the case, for example, of the student wanting to complain about something at home, “parents should take the trouble to come to talk to the teacher.”¹⁰³¹

The school-family contact, begun with the act of enrollment, continued afterward in various **moments** and in a variety of **modalities**.

Concerning the **moments**, it should be stressed that the disposition to dialogue and its practice were safeguarded to the end, even in difficult and extreme cases, such as that of dismissing a student from school:

It is better to send students home than to permit them to absent themselves frequently, for this sets a very bad example. Three or four students will be found in every school who always ask permission to absent themselves. If it is granted, they will easily lead others to absent themselves without reason. It is better to send students of this sort home and to have fifty who are very assiduous than to have a hundred who are absent at every moment.

Before sending students home for these or other reasons, however, the teacher will speak with their parents several times, and explain to them how important it is that their children come to school assiduously and how it is otherwise almost impossible for them to learn anything, since they forget in one day what they have learned in several. Students will not be sent away from school unless it appears that both they and their parents are not concerned about it and do not profit at all by all that it has been possible to say to them in this matter.¹⁰³²

Concerning the **modalities** of this contact, it must be noted that it did not happen only through direction of the teacher. What seems unusual today is the existence, in the Lasallian school, of a student who carried out this relationship: the already mentioned Visitor of the Absent Students. If a student came late to school, he was deprived of doing the reading. In those circumstances, an additional function fell to the Visitor of the Absent Students (and the Sick). In the visit to the family, representing the teacher, he communicated to the parents the fact of this setback, as punishment suffered for this reason.

The *Conduct*, in addition to speaking of a dialogical relationship, alerted teachers regarding a set of **things to be careful of in contact with parents** of students, such as that of **not making them unhappy**, but, on the contrary, **pleasing them and being attentive to their desires, likes, even complaints**.

Previously, for example, was mentioned the direction not to be hasty “to the extent possible” in promoting the very young, even if intelligent and having a good memory, so that they could have sufficient time in school. In this example, the text is only completed by adding to it the condition in which this be done: that it not displease the parents.¹⁰³³

Said in a positive way, it was necessary **to leave the parents satisfied** with the school and with the teacher or, at least, to make them feel less the inevitable annoyances. Attentive accompaniment of the student beginning to write, observing him, helping him practice what he was taught, showing him the mistakes he made: “this manner of instruction will please the parents. The children will not fail to tell their parents that the teacher has taught them by making them write while supervised, that the teacher has personally guided their hand, and so on.”¹⁰³⁴

More than one of De La Salle’s ministries was begun as a **response to the desires** of the families. Rigault demonstrated that with regard to the boarding house at Saint Yon, a ministry established to respond to the aspirations of the better-off families of Rouen, above all those belonging to the big business class: “We recall here his eminent practical genius: he wanted to respond to the desires of certain families. According to the regulations of Saint Yon, parents were consulted about the special studies that they judged useful to their children.”¹⁰³⁵

As was pointed out in the study on Lasallian education “Connected to Life,” taking into consideration and starting from the concerns of the clientele being served did not happen only in the origins and implementation of the work at Saint Yon. The description of not a few of the practices of life at any Lasallian school reveals attention to the wants and reactions of the parents.

Thus, the Inspector would not put a particular student in the first level of basic writing for various reasons, the second of which was because “his parents did not want him to.”¹⁰³⁶ According to the record of the students’ qualities, filled out at the end of the year, the teacher of the following year was informed that the parents of François de Terieux loved their son and **did not like** him to be corrected, while those of Lambert du Long did not mind if he were punished physically.¹⁰³⁷

Attention to the parents took into consideration their **wishes**. For example,

If parents make complaints when they bring back their children, the receiving teacher will be careful always to excuse the teacher, if it is of the teacher that complaints are made, giving whatever advice is judged necessary, and then carefully reporting later to the Director the complaints that have been made and the reason.¹⁰³⁸

In the case of physical punishment, it was normal not to administer any that would generate complaints from the students or the parents.¹⁰³⁹

The **situation**, the needs **of the family** and the **filial duties** of the students **were taken into consideration** at the time of applying or not the norms established for the students as a whole.

Thus, students were not allowed to leave class to buy things or for similar reasons. But the students could be absent, especially in winter:

Children will be permitted to absent themselves from school in order to buy stockings, shoes, and so forth. They will be permitted to absent themselves even to have their clothes mended; however, these permissions will be given only when it appears absolutely necessary and when the parents cannot choose another time.¹⁰⁴⁰

During the class session, a student could always go on a pilgrimage outside the city when accompanied by his parents and at their request. The young Jean Mulot was authorized to miss school several times a month “supposedly to help his mother.”¹⁰⁴¹

There are even cases in which the *Conduct* proposed a type of negotiation with the parents. They did not want or were not in a position to accept, for example, the effectiveness of the method of beginning reading used in the Christian School? Suggest an experimental enrollment of three months so that they could see whether or not it was effective.¹⁰⁴²

The counterpart to consideration of the family on the part of De La Salle’s schools was the hope that the parents meet their commitments to the academic institution they chose, both those which were communicated at the time of enrollment and others that might arise. For example, if they were in a position to do so, furnishing their children with the white paper they would need for writing exercises.¹⁰⁴³

In certain situations, with those parents who, in general, did not have much instruction and formation, measures of a clearly pedagogical nature were taken. Thus, if the student skipped school, it became the co-responsibility of the parents, requiring one of them to bring him back to school and explain the reason he was absent. If unauthorized absences of the student from school on the pretext that the parents needed him happened easily and began to multiply, the direction was that, ordinarily, the student be let go. He could be readmitted later, under one condition: that the parents, as well as he himself, be willing, from then forward, to ask for authorization every time that the child needed to miss school. If the parents of a student previously dismissed from the school for other reasons asked for his readmission, it could be received, but after expressing the hope that he would change his ways given the warning that he would be dismissed again, permanently, if he did not change his conduct.¹⁰⁴⁴ If the student was absent for “lewdness,” he was to be corrected, that is, punished physically, but it was not done by the Inspector or the teacher. It would have to be the parents who corrected him at home, before he could return to school.¹⁰⁴⁵

The *Conduct* even included a somewhat surprising pedagogical method, that of, extraordinarily, punishing the parents, in the hope of a positive reaction. From the text:

Finally, before sending away students on account of absences or for anything else, it is well to make use of the following means to remedy the situation ... make use of some other penance that will embarrass the student, be unpleasant for the parents, and will incite the student to come punctually and thus will oblige the parents to force the child to be assiduous.¹⁰⁴⁶

In other words, De La Salle and his teachers contributed to the education of the parents themselves. Thus, they undertook actions such as that just mentioned to convince parents of their obligation to send their children to school,¹⁰⁴⁷ or of the care to make them aware of the importance of the children not easily skipping school, or of the excellence and even superiority of the Lasallian methods of teaching.¹⁰⁴⁸

De La Salle did not go to the point of explicitly stating that the teacher should use the children to manipulate the practices or convictions of the parents. However, just as he saw that the children of the poor who wanted to go to school influenced their parents’ willingness to send them to school, evidently he also realized ways of children having an educational influence over their parents from what the school taught them.¹⁰⁴⁹ Blain not only recorded this, but also explained

Many children, instructed by teachers so competent, pious and zealous, were seen becoming themselves their parents’ tutors and giving, to those who had given them life and from whom they had the right to expect to be instructed, lessons on piety, Christian doctrine, and customs.¹⁰⁵⁰

In the catechism studied in the Lasallian school, students learned the reciprocal duties of parents and children. This could not fail to have repercussions on family life. Beyond this, the children brought to the family Christian sayings that they used as a model for writing or that they received as rewards, which, obviously, were read by literate parents and could be heard by the illiterate. The older students helped their parents enrich themselves by the books that they brought home. Thus, the text of the *Rules of Decorum*, “used at home by students, as a topic

of preparatory exercises for public reading to be done in the classroom, allowed the poor families to also acquire agreeable behavior in their relations with educated persons.”¹⁰⁵¹

The school, thus, influenced the family through direct contact and through the children. In the family, it also prolonged its action with those children, who were its students. At home, they learned by heart the content that, earlier, they had recited during breakfast at school. Those learning to write repeated, in their home, preparatory exercises for that technique as much as possible. At home, students made clean copies of texts that the teacher had returned to them with their spelling corrected. They wrote the pages they were given as punishment for not having, in school, written what they should have, or having done it poorly.¹⁰⁵² Above all, those who had the most difficulty, following the recommendations of the teacher on the last day of class, studied reading frequently, and even writing, if they were writing students, during the holiday.¹⁰⁵³

In their dialogical relationship with the family and their direct and indirect action with it, those responsible for Lasallian education characterized their conduct with **attitudes** consistent with the nature and importance of their function.

They tried to be objective, speaking with knowledge of the cause. If, for example, “the Inspector does not know a student’s situation or the reasons why he was absent, he will find out from the teacher and then will speak with the student and his parents and tell them what will happen in that case.”¹⁰⁵⁴

They were friendly, but reserved and direct: they spoke to the parents “very courteously.”¹⁰⁵⁵ “The Brothers will be brief in speaking with the parents of the pupils.”¹⁰⁵⁶ “The affability with which they are obliged to speak to the mothers of the pupils, in order not to repel them, ought not to prevent them from maintaining this reserve in their regard, and they will take care to complete their conversation with them in few words.”¹⁰⁵⁷

They were respectful but, at the same time, clear and firm. For example, was it the parents’ fault that the student missed class? Whoever received him at school would have the student enter into class. They would then speak separately with the parents, so that they would be aware of their mistake and the harm they were doing their child by causing or permitting his absence. The parents were then asked to commit to being faithful in making him go to school, making it clear that if their son missed school again for the same reason, it would not be allowed. This was what should be done.¹⁰⁵⁸

Finally, the Christian Schools maintained their independence. One of the ways of ensuring independence was giving total and universally gratuitous education¹⁰⁵⁹

There were times when De La Salle and his Brothers suffered at the hands of families, as in Alais, where the Calvinist parents, in their homes “contradicted the doctrine that had been taught” to their children by the Brothers. Or in Les Vans, where the Brothers’ lives were at risk from the Calvinists.¹⁰⁶⁰ Parents’ response to the dedication and effectiveness of the educational activity of De La Salle and his teachers was generally positive and grateful. They expressed their appreciation, for example, with their “cries and wishes” on the occasion of the closing of the Sunday School, and with the affliction they felt and “went in a multitude” to appeal to the pastor of Saint Sulpice when the Brothers decided to withdraw from the schools of that parish, due to the difficulties that the teachers of the Little Schools and the Writing Masters had caused them, and that arose when the pastor negotiated with those teachers the conditions whereby the Brothers could return and continue, in peace, their work.¹⁰⁶¹

There is no better conclusion to this topic of the Lasallian school and the family than to present, once again, De La Salle’s writing that can be considered the best testimony he gave to the educational vocation of the parents. It is the well-known passage in which he suggested to his teachers to take inspiration from good parents to live the balance that should characterize their educational relationship with the students:

If you have for them the firmness of a father to restrain and to withdraw them from misbehavior, you must also have for them the tenderness of a mother to draw them to you and to do for them all the good that depends on you.¹⁰⁶²

Assessment by Historians of Education

In the threefold relationship maintained by the Lasallian school with Society, Church and Family, the most commented on by the historians of education (by a long mark) is the relationship maintained with the Church. The religious dimension, particularly religious instruction in view of the information and formation of the disciple of Christ, became the backdrop of the framework within which scholars outline the Lasallian educational work.

They consider the Lasallian teachers to be “ardent Catholics,”¹⁰⁶³ and De La Salle and his Institute to be people who collaborated with the Church, placing them “in the line of the Council of Trent.”¹⁰⁶⁴ Tombetta, not considering the scholarly activity of other institutions, evidently went even further to state that it was through De La Salle’s work that the counter-Reformation educational action was accomplished by Catholics in France.¹⁰⁶⁵

Various authors also underline how De La Salle, through the school, contributed to the missionary effort carried out within France (missions *ad intra*). Buisson saw him sending his teachers “as missionaries of the Catholic faith, propagators of Catholic doctrine and opponents of heresy.”¹⁰⁶⁶ And Chartier, with others, recalled that in at least three cases (Mende, Alais, and Les Vans) “it was a question of using the new (Lasallian) Community to bring about the reconquest of the ‘newly converted.’”¹⁰⁶⁷

Concerning the second relationship, that directly with the State, the only thing found among the historians is a reference to the passage already studied,¹⁰⁶⁸ in which De La Salle told his teachers that they were to promote the parents’ good through their educational work. There are numerous commentaries on the tools that De La Salle pointed to for promoting that good: reading, writing, rules of decorum, etc. With these, Zuluaga stated that De La Salle contributed to “the refinement of manners” of the simple French people of his time. Regarding language, not only are there authors who stress the fact that De La Salle contributed to making the French people read, but also some that attribute to his Institute an important role in spreading the language of Racine throughout the world. Riboulet made that point most explicitly. For him, De La Salle’s Institute “contributed perhaps more than anyone to the knowledge and spreading of the French language.”¹⁰⁶⁹

The rich topic of the Lasallian school’s relationship with the families of the students has not been much explored, not even by the commentators on De La Salle. It is not surprising, then, that it is practically absent amongst the historians of education.

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Abbreviations

[These abbreviations refer to the writings of John Baptist de La Salle. They are presented here as they are found in Brother Edgard's introductory chapter of this book and in the endnotes prepared by this same author. The two exceptions are CL and LP, which are used only in this English-language edition's endnotes.]

- C *Letters*
- C1 *Minor Compendium*, a pamphlet summary of *The Duties of a Christian to God*
- C2 *Major Compendium*, a pamphlet summary of *The Duties of a Christian to God*
- CL *Cahiers lasalliens*
- CT *Collection of Various Short Treatises*
- DA *The Duties of a Christian to God*
- DB *The Duties of a Christian to God*, given in question and answer form
- DC *The Exterior and Public Worship That Christians Are Obligated to Offer to God and the Means of Doing So*
- E *Exercises of Piety to Be Performed during the Day in the Christian Schools*
- EMO *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer*
- FV *Formula of Vows*
- GE *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*
- I *Instructions and Prayers for Holy Mass, Confession, and Communion*
- LP Lasallian Publications (USA)
- MD *Meditations for All the Sundays of the Year*
- MF *Meditations for the Principal Feasts of the Year*
- MH *Memorandum on the Habit*
- MLF *Memorandum on the French Language*
- MR *Meditations for the Time of Retreat*
- RC *Common Rules*
- RI *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself*
- RU *Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*

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Endnotes

- 1 “An institute is called lay which ... does not include the exercise of sacred orders” (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 588). In other words, lay pertains to that religious institute which does not include priests amongst its members.
- 2 Hengemüle, pp. 215-218.
- 3 Christian Schools indicates both the academic institutions created by De La Salle (parallel to the existing Charity Schools, Little Schools ...) and the religious Institute begun by him (Brothers of the Christian Schools).
- 4 Many times designated simply as the *Conduct of the Christian Schools*, or even the *Conduct*.
- 5 Recall this is the translation of a book written by a Brazilian (editor).
- 6 1984, p. 195.
- 7 P. 386.
- 8 Reformed Christians (Protestants) converted to Catholicism.
- 9 P. 104.
- 10 The economic doctrine of the 16th and 17th centuries looking fundamentally to guarantee the State the means to gain precious metals (gold, silver, etc.).
- 11 Per Quéniart, p. 162.
- 12 Per Chartier et al., p. 40.
- 13 Per Groperrin, p. 12.
- 14 Per Alpage, p. 70.
- 15 1970 II, pp. 72-73.
- 16 Per Jolibert, p. 31.
- 17 Poutet 1999/43, p. 186.
- 18 MR 193,1,1;193,3,1.
- 19 MR 194,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 436. Translator’s note: Throughout, translation of quotations have been taken (where possible) from the Lasallian Publications, Christian Brothers: Washington, DC, English-language translations of De La Salle’s writings. Original citations have been preserved, followed by “LP: Title, page number” for the Lasallian Publications citation.
- 20 DB 1,2,4 LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 244.
- 21 MR 194,1,2. Theme to be addressed in “Education Linked to Life,” below.
- 22 DA 310,2,5; 310,2,5; 206,0,4; 206,0,5. DB 3,23,7 and 8.
- 23 DA 206,0,2. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 75.
- 24 C 22,9. LP: *Conduct*, 88.
- 25 II, p. 358.
- 26 A hospital was “an establishment that not only received the sick and the wounded, but also invalids, chronically ill, the elderly, abandoned children, etc.” (Delsalle, p. 66).
- 27 P. 63.
- 28 MF 108,2,2.
- 29 MF 120,3,2.
- 30 Blain II, p. 358.
- 31 MR 194,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 436.

- 32 7,11. Cf. C 56,12. LP: *Rules*, p. 38.
- 33 MF 153,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 283.
- 34 No citation in original text. LP: *Rules*, p. 13.
- 35 7,1. Bold mine. LP: *Rules*, p. 36.
- 36 MF 92,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 389.
- 37 Per Poutet 1970 II, p. 91.
- 38 Poutet 1970 II, p. 81, N. 15.
- 39 Blain II, p. 25.
- 40 MR 194,1,2. Cf. 1 Cor 9,18. LP: *Meditations*, p. 435.
- 41 1970 I, p. 529.
- 42 1970 II, p. 92.
- 43 The vow whereby De La Salle and two Brothers, in a difficult moment for the nascent Institute, promised one another, in solidarity, to guarantee the future of the institute, even if they were “obliged to beg for alms and live only on bread.”
- 44 C 25,6. LP: *Letters*, p. 94.
- 45 MF 86,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 376.
- 46 C 113: 3 and 4. LP: *Letters*, p. 128.
- 47 Cf. Hermans, pp. 128-129. Superintendent: the king’s representative in a *generality* (administrative area).
- 48 1970 I, p. 529.
- 49 “Education Linked to Life”
- 50 I, p. 70.
- 51 Morales I, p. 295-309.
- 52 Cf. Blain I, p. 297.
- 53 Id., p. 298.
- 54 Wife of King Luis XIV.
- 55 No citation in original text.
- 56 No citation in original text.
- 57 “There will be an Inspector who will supervise all the schools, who will be the Brother Director. If there is need of several in a house, he or they besides the Brother Director will report to him ...” (RC 11,1, LP: *Rules*, p. 52). The first master was the one in charge of the most advanced classes.
- 58 RC 9,18. LP: *Rules*, p. 48.
- 59 Cabourdin & Vial, p. 15.
- 60 GE 16,2. The passages of the *Conduct* cited in the original Portuguese text are from the French manuscript 11.759 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, according to the numbering scheme used in the French edition of the *Complete Works* of De La Salle. When the citation is from the first published edition, that of 1720, this is indicated, along with the page of the source. LP: *Conduct*, p. 159.
- 61 LP: *Conduct*, p. 160.
- 62 LP: *Conduct*, p. 161
- 63 LP: *Conduct*, p. 161.
- 64 LP: *Conduct*, p. 161.

- 65 LP: *Conduct*, p. 161. The general reaction of people who learn this: Take the children off the streets to offer them appropriate living conditions ... keep them in school all day, with food and education... ECA, CIEPs, CIACs, bag-school, “don’t give alms, give school” ... It seems that the lesson is being learned that more than three hundred years after De La Salle: “having the children under their guidance from morning until evening, these teachers may be able to teach them to live a good life” (RC, 1,3; LP: *Rules*, p. 14). Or the ancient lesson of the Chinese: “Do not give a fish; teach to fish.”
- 66 LP: *Conduct*, p. 160.
- 67 LP: *Conduct*, p. 160
- 68 LP: *Conduct*, p. 160.
- 69 LP: *Conduct*, p. 160.
- 70 GE 15,6,39. LP: *Conduct*, p. 150.
- 71 No citation in original text.
- 72 C 99,4. LP: *Letters*, p. 215. This theme is simply announced here, since it will be the object of an entire chapter later: “Effective and Efficient Education.”
- 73 II, p.358.
- 74 This theme will be the object of development in the following chapter: “Popular Education.”
- 75 1,3. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 76 GE 22,2,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 201.
- 77 Per Lucard I, p. 119.
- 78 I, p. 274.
- 79 In the *Conduct of the Christian Schools*, a lesson is a combination of content to be mastered. For example, everything that had to be learned in reading was divided into nine progressive lessons.
- 80 7,2. LP: *Rules*, p. 36.
- 81 11,2,1; cf. 3,1,20. LP: *Conduct*, p. 120.
- 82 P. 281.
- 83 Cf. Justo, pl. 230, N. 16 and 17.
- 84 1970 I, p. 590.
- 85 Poutet 1995, p. 196; cf. 201; Anselme 1951, p.123.
- 86 C 57,10. LP: *Letters*, p. 146
- 87 That is, they love “with excessive love” (Richelet).
- 88 GE 16,2,20. LP: *Conduct*, p. 161.
- 89 Offices were various tasks that the schoolmaster entrusted to specific students. In its proper sense, office, in the context of the time, was “a function entrusted by the king to a particular person.” The exercise of that function was “dignified, because a participation in royal power; and a public function, because service of the king, particularly in the juridical and financial realm, a service repaid by a salary” (Cabourdin and Viard, p. 235).
- 90 GE 18,9,14 and 18,9,15. LP: *Conduct*, p. 253
- 91 Glatigny, p. 75.
- 92 Chartier et al., p. 80.
- 93 Marique, p. 242.
- 94 Viguerie, p. 145.
- 95 Guérin and Vertheffeuille, p. 156.

- 96 1980, pp. 26-27, 43.
- 97 P. 36.
- 98 Cubberley II, p 345.
- 99 Seeley, p. 231.
- 100 Gastón, p.173.
- 101 P. 97.
- 102 P. 349.
- 103 Per Fiévet, p. 60.
- 104 P. 61.
- 105 MF 80,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 366.
- 106 1970 II, p. 129.
- 107 Per Alcalde, p. 26.
- 108 Id., ib.
- 109 “Man of the world, agreeable and distinct by any modes and by the spirit” (*Petit Robert*).
- 110 P. 525.
- 111 No citation in original text.
- 112 In the continuity of which, *inter alia*, similarly, states in Proverbs (22:2) “The rich and the poor are met: the Lord made them all.”
- 113 *Ancien Régime*: System of government existing in France prior to the French Revolution (1798).
- 114 Poutet 1999/43, p. 186.
- 115 P. 21.
- 116 Sworn guilds: “Autonomous professional groups, with their own legal, ethical, and disciplinary personality. Their members are united by oath. They are the owners, often, of a monopoly, that is, the privilege of manufacturing a particular product” (Delsalle, p. 80).
- 117 The privileges were jealously protected. There existed a “Conservation,” which was the tribunal of justice established, according to Furetière, to conserve privileges granted to some communities, that is, living in the same place, members of the same corporation ... And there was the “Conservator of Privilege,” defined by Richelet as “the official established by the king to care for the preservation of the privileges granted by the kings to universities, markets...”
- 118 That is to say, gratuitously.
- 119 That is, of the archbishop’s chancellor, charged with the control of the masters.
- 120 Poutet 1970 I, p. 528.
- 121 Per Poutet 1970 II, p. 96.
- 122 Lauraire 1996, p. 62.
- 123 MF 190,3,1. “Quality also signifies nobility of birth, the state, the condition of a noble person. He is a man, she is a woman of quality” (*Nouveau Dictionnaire de l’Académie française*).
- 124 SA 214,1,1. MF 166,2,1. DB 2,10,3. MD 9,1,2; 91,1,2, etc.
- 125 RU 0,0,9 and 0,0,14. LP: *Rules of Decorum*, p.4 and 5.
- 126 LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 100.
- 127 DA 215,0,6; 209,0,5. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 82.
- 128 MR 193,2,1; 194,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 435.

- 129 GE 15,6,11.
- 130 MD 37,3,1.
- 131 MR 202,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 455.
- 132 Per Blain I, p. 169.
- 133 Blain II, p. 355.
- 134 C 19,15.
- 135 MF 86,2,2.
- 136 Cf. Maillefer, pp. 45-49.
- 137 I, p. 362.
- 138 II, p. 9.
- 139 C 17,14. LP: *Letters*, p. 72.
- 140 MR 206,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 465.
- 141 Blain I, p. 297.
- 142 GE 21,1,5;21,1,7;18,11,1; 18,11,2; 21,1,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 192.
- 143 GE 22,4,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 203.
- 144 Blain II, p. 355.
- 145 I, 3.
- 146 1, 4. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 147 1, 5. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 148 MF 166,2,2; 150,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 309.
- 149 Cf. MF 92,3,1.
- 150 No citation in original text.
- 151 Per Fiévet, p. 45.
- 152 II, p. 7.
- 153 MF 189,1,2; cf. 166,2,1; 143,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 351.
- 154 1970 I, p. 321.
- 155 1970 I, p. 105.
- 156 Pp. 85-86, N. 39. By the way, it is necessary to point out that Fiévet's work – *Les enfants pauvres à l'école – la révolution scolaire de Jean-Baptiste de La Salle* – is certainly the best text that has been written on who were the clientele who attended the Lasallian school.
- 157 GE 4, 10,9. LP, *Conduct*, p. 83.
- 158 GE 9,2,5. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 106-107.
- 159 GE 22,4,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 203.
- 160 1951, p. 245.
- 161 Pp. 243-244.
- 162 II. Account of various things that have not be captured in the life of De La Salle.
- 163 C 13,7. LP: *Letters*, p. 60.
- 164 "Fraternal education"

- 165 RC 7,13 and 14. LP: *Rules*, pp. 38 and 39.
- 166 GE 21,2,12. LP: *Conduct*, p.194.
- 167 MF 143,2,2; Cf. 80,3,2; 150,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 264.
- 168 RC 7, 14. LP: *Rules*, p. 39.
- 169 Blain II, p. 101.
- 170 Poutet 1978, p. 3.
- 171 RC 26,1. LP: *Rules*, p. 96.
- 172 P. 193.
- 173 Marique, p. 241; Wimer and Schöler, p. 73, etc.
- 174 1974, p. 75.
- 175 P. 53.
- 176 MR 207 and 208. LP: *Meditations*, p. xiv.
- 177 MR 207,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 469.
- 178 Poutet 1995, p. 79.
- 179 In the 17th century, Abbot had various meanings: a) effective superior of a monastery located in an abbey; b) a priest who, distinct from a pastor, did not hold a benefice, that is ecclesiastical income; c) a lay person, neither monk nor resident in an abbey, but who received an abbey in care that is, had a right to a third of the proceeds derived from it. This was the case of the Abbot Clement.
- 180 Blain II p. 73ff.
- 181 Poutet 1999 (CL 44), p. 140.
- 182 A word which, at the time, signified, among other things, self-command, reserve, restraint, moderation, circumspection, above all within oneself.
- 183 Cf. Blain I, pp. 290, 364.
- 184 Blain II, p. 11.
- 185 Blain II. Report on various things, p. 100.
- 186 *Lasalliana* 06-14-C-22.
- 187 GE 16,2,21.
- 188 P. 63
- 189 P. 346.
- 190 I, 59.
- 191 Baumgartner, p. 130.
- 192 Per Fitzpatrick, p. 47.
- 193 P. 156.
- 194 P. 130.
- 195 P. 67.
- 196 P. 185.
- 197 Designation attributed to the De La Salle Brothers, in France, during the 18th and 19th centuries, especially because they refused to study Latin and did not teach Latin grammar and literature to the children of the poor, who they educated.

- 198 P.179.
- 199 P.111.
- 200 RC 1,3. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 201 That is, the cards that register information about the person of the student and his life at school.
- 202 GE 22; 13;13,1;13,4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 241.
- 203 GE 19,0,0-4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 179.
- 204 GE 23,1,4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 206.
- 205 GE 21,1,11. LP: *Conduct*, p. 193.
- 206 GE 19,0,0-3.
- 207 21,3,1. LP: *Conduct*, p. 197.
- 208 GE 22,4,4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 203.
- 209 GE 22,3,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 202.
- 210 111,1,105.
- 211 GE 4,6,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 78.
- 212 GE 15,4,5. LP, Co 143.
- 213 GE 15,4,14; cf. 15,1,11. LP: *Conduct*, p. 144.
- 214 GE 15,1,111. LP: *Conduct*, p. 139.
- 215 GE 15,1,10. LP: *Conduct*, p. 138.
- 216 GE 11,2,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 121.
- 217 P.205,3,391.
- 218 In "Effective and Efficient Education."
- 219 GE 3,2,19-21; RU 207,6,12; GE 3,2,16. LP: Dec, 130 and LP: *Conduct*, p. 63.
- 220 Per Anselme 1951. Introduction, p. 38.
- 221 GE 24,3,5.
- 222 I, p. 284.
- 223 *Lasalliana* 04-7-A-25.
- 224 GE 3,8,7; 4,8,1;4,9,8;5,0,11;5,0,12;5,0,23; 3,7,11.
- 225 GE 22,2,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 201.
- 226 3,2,9; cf. 9,2,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 62.
- 227 22,4,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 205
- 228 4,8,2; 4, 9,8; 4,9,9; 4,10,7;4,10,16; 4,10,18.
- 229 1995, p. 180.
- 230 P.212.
- 231 French currency of the time.
- 232 GE 5,0,23; 3,7,1; 3,7,9; 15,13; 15,14.
- 233 GE 4,9,7;4,10,4.
- 234 GE 3,6,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 67.

- 235 4,9,8. Bold ours. LP: *Conduct*, p. 81.
- 236 RC 7,13. MR 201,2,2.
- 237 Blain II. *Report on Various Things*, p. 101.
- 238 This term will be more fully developed in the chapter referring to “fraternal education.”
- 239 MR 198,3,2.
- 240 MR 198,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 445.
- 241 GE 21,3,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 197.
- 242 GE 18,9,8.
- 243 GE 10,2,1; 10,2,2; GE of 1720, p. 8.
- 244 GE 22,3,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 201.
- 245 GE 2,1,7. LP: *Conduct*, p. 52.
- 246 Conduct oneself as social practice requires (*Petit Robert*).
- 247 GE 3,9,1. LP: *Conduct*, p. 70.
- 248 DA 213 and 213,1; GE 7,2,7; 4,10,14 to 17; 4,10,26. MR 197,3,1. DB 0,3. GE 12,6,3. E 9.
- 249 RC 7,12. LP: *Rules*, p. 38.
- 250 MR 194,3,1; 197,2,1. MR 200,3,2; cf. 196,2,2; 198,3,2. MR 196,2,2. Elements of the synthesized vision with be expanded upon in the following chapter: “Christian Education.”
- 251 MR 203,2,3.
- 252 GE 13,3,8; 18,8; 18,9,5-7; 18,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 178.
- 253 Poutet 1995, pp. 179-180.
- 254 GE 5,0,23; 8,2,11; 19,9,7. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 88, 99.
- 255 GE 6,0,5.
- 256 RU 205,4,396 and 205,4,395. LP: *Rules of Decorum*, p. 92.
- 257 RU 205,4,397; 205,4,398.
- 258 RU 205,4,298. CB 9, 80. CA 1. GE 9,5,4; 10,1,1; 10,2,1. CA 2.
- 259 1970, I, p. 702 and n. 63.
- 260 “Education Linked to Life.”
- 261 This dimension is not developed here only because an entire chapter will be dedicated it, which will speak of “Christian Education.”
- 262 MD 44,2,1. Bold ours. LP: *Meditations*, p. 109.
- 263 MR 195,3,2. Bold ours. LP: *Meditations*, p. 438.
- 264 DA 0,0,8; 202,0,1; 300,0,11. Bold ours.
- 265 E 1,3. Bold ours. LP: *Religious Instruction*, p. 178.
- 266 MR 200,2,1; 200,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 449-450.
- 267 MF 160,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 296.
- 268 Per Poutet 1970 I, pp. 700-701.
- 269 MF 160,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 296.
- 270 Per Poutet 1970 II, p. 210. Bold ours.

- 271 Court of justice, which also exercises administrative and political powers (Delsalle, p. 92).
- 272 Fosseyeu, p. 34.
- 273 Poutet 1999/44, p. 123.
- 274 Gropserin, p. 15. Bold ours. Remembering that “institution” could mean establishment as well as teaching, education of a child (one of the essays of Montaigne is entitled: *De l’institution des enfants*).
- 275 1970 I, pp. 595-596.
- 276 1. Per Gropserin, p. 15. Bold ours.
- 277 Blain II, p. 359; cf. I, p. 34.
- 278 MR 206,1,2. Cf. MF 92,3,1. Bold ours. LP: *Meditations*, p. 465.
- 279 II, pp. 358 and 359. Cf. CT 10,2,11.
- 280 MF79,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 364.
- 281 MD 37,2,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 98.
- 282 MF 160,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 296.
- 283 MF 133,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 245.
- 284 MF 92,3,1. Cf. MR 206,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 389.
- 285 C 18, 14-16. LP: *Letters*, p. 76.
- 286 GE 24,1,1; 24,1,2; 24,2,1; 24,2,3; 24,2,4; 24,2,5; 24,4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 218.
- 287 GE 21,2.
- 288 GE 14,1,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 133.
- 289 RC 1,3. Bold ours. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 290 RC 1,4-6. MR 193,2,1; 194,1,1. MD 37,3,1.
- 291 Poutet 1995, p. 172.
- 292 C 14,19. LP: *Letters*, p. 64.
- 293 C 70,7. LP: *Letters*, p. 157.
- 294 MH 0,9,47. LP: *Rules*, p. 189.
- 295 RC 1,2. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 296 Poutet 1995, p. 13.
- 297 Mt 22:37.
- 298 CT 11,2,3.
- 299 RU 0,0,1. LP: *Rules of Decorum*, p. 3.
- 300 MF 154, 1, 2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 284.
- 301 CT 11,2,3; 11,2,16.
- 302 MF 134,1,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 246.
- 303 MF 87,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 378.
- 304 CT 11,2,3; 11,2,11.
- 305 MR 193,1,2; 193,3,1.
- 306 MD 59,2.

- 307 In reality, the Brothers of Christian Teaching, or Teachers, founded in 1592 by César de Bus, are a religious institution originating from a confraternity of catechists operating in schools, seminaries and missions. As in the present case, they were, according to History, frequently confused with the Brothers of the Christian Schools.
- 308 Gilson, p. 193.
- 309 Gal, p. 79.
- 310 Oiytet 1970 II, p. 188 N. 14.
- 311 LP: *Rules*, p. 36 and 44.
- 312 C 49,6. Cf. 51,4. LP: *Letters*, p. 180.
- 313 Campos p. 28.
- 314 N. 67, 68a.
- 315 MF 174,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 324.
- 316 C 38,5; 33,1. LP: *Letters*, pp. 49 and 34.
- 317 Willot, p. 116.
- 318 MR 205,2,2. Cf. MF 127,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 463.
- 319 RI 3,0,3. Bold ours. LP: *Rules*, p. 199.
- 320 P. 328.
- 321 Pp. 112-124.
- 322 I, p. 133.
- 323 RC 10:9, 6, 7, and 8. GE, 16,1,11;16,1,12; 16,1;13.
- 324 Ecclesiastical title with payment.
- 325 DB 2,10,4.
- 326 Goubert e Roche I, p. 80.
- 327 Id., p. 81.
- 328 Fiévet, p. 41.
- 329 Per Poutet II, p. 192.
- 330 Per Fiévet, p. 50, N. 6; 39.
- 331 Per Fiévet, p. 40; 51, N.10.
- 332 LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 219.
- 333 DA 403,2,7; 206,0,14; cf. 205,0,10. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 77.
- 334 The priest who renewed the parish of Saint Nicholas of Chardonnet, establishing in it a community of ecclesiastics around the parish priest. This parish became a type of seminary and inspired other similar communities in France.
- 335 I, p. 389.
- 336 P. 234.
- 337 No citation in original text.
- 338 No citation in original text.
- 339 MR 193,1,1 and 3,1.
- 340 MR 193,1,1 and 2,2. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 432-433 and LP: *Rules*, p. 141.
- 341 MR 194,1,2; cf. 207,3,2.

- 342 MR 206,1,1. MF 90,3,1. FV 2,0,1-2,0,2. LP M, 464 and 384; LP: *Rules*, p. 141.
- 343 MF 148,3,2. MR 201,3,1. RC 2,10.
- 344 I, p. 384.
- 345 RC I,3. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 346 1,4. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 347 MD 57,3,2. MF 102,2,2.
- 348 MF 187,3,2; 150,2,2; 171,3,2; 116,2,2. GE 9,3,4. DA 0,0 5.
- 349 MD 39,2,2. MF 131,1,2; 187,3,2. MF 198,3,1; 205,3,1. Cf. Eph 4, 12-16.
- 350 MF 102,2,2.
- 351 Per Viard, p. 786.
- 352 GE 9,3,10.
- 353 MR 194,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 436.
- 354 Jansenism: The theological doctrine that predicts the radical corruption of the human person and the superiority of predestination and of grace over human freedom. Gallicanism: Claims (or reclaims) French privileges in the midst of the universal Church and notably before the Pope. Quietism: "The mystical doctrine that makes Christian perfection consist of a continuous state of quietude and union with God, and in which the soul becomes indifferent to works and even to salvation itself" (*Petit Robert*).
- 355 DB 1,2,1. Cf. DA 405,2,3. MF197,2,1. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 243.
- 356 MF194,3,1. GE 9,3,10. LP: *Meditations*, p. 436.
- 357 MR 194,3,1; cf. 197,2,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 436.
- 358 MF 134,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 247.
- 359 MR 194,2,1; 195,2,2. MF 115,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 435.
- 360 MF 96,3,1; 139,1,2 and 139,2,1. MD 32,2,1. MF 87,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 179, 256, and 90.
- 361 MD 33. MR 196,1,2 and 3; 2-1,3,1; 215,2,1 and 3,1.
- 362 RC 1,4-6; MR 193,2; 194,1.
- 363 Bold ours. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 364 RI 3,0,8. "Lord, the work is yours." LP: *Rules*, p. 200.
- 365 MD 46,3,1. MF 102,1,2; 133,2,2.
- 366 MR 205,1,1. MD 37,1,2 and 37,3,1.
- 367 MF 96,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 178.
- 368 MF 199-200.
- 369 MF 198,3,1; 199,1,2; 200,1,1; 205,3,1.
- 370 Poutet 1995 p. 91.
- 371 MR 1931,2 and 3,1.
- 372 MD 56,3,2. MR 197-198. Regarding his mediatorial function, recall the 17th-century doctrine, according to which, between God and the "underling," or "inferior," there was but one mediation: that of the "superior," whomever that might be: bishop, community director, or teacher. Any person dressed in authority, beginning with the king, exercised that authority on God's behalf and in his name.
- 373 MD 37,3,1.
- 374 MR 193,2,2.

- 375 MR 195,2,1; 201,2,1.
- 376 MR 201,2,1; MF 132,3,1; 186,3,2.
- 377 Poutet-Pungier, p 59.
- 378 MF 170,3,2. MR 193,2,2; 201,1,1.
- 379 MD 61,2,1. MF 154,1,2.
- 380 MR 203-204; 205-206.
- 381 RU 0,0,3. LP: *Rules of Decorum*, p. 3.
- 382 1987, p. 38.
- 383 MR 194,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 435.
- 384 MR 207,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 468.
- 385 1995, p. 85.
- 386 MF 166,2,2; 96,3,2.
- 387 GE 15,4,8. LP: *Conduct*, p. 143.
- 388 GE 11,3,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 121.
- 389 GE 1,1,9.
- 390 GE 2,3,2; cf. 2,1,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 235.
- 391 GE 18,9,7. LP: *Conduct*, p. 49.
- 392 MF 197,2,1; cf. 200,3,1. MF 134,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 442.
- 393 GE 22,2; 22,3.
- 394 GE 13,4.
- 395 MR 198,3,2; 202,1,2. GE 13,42. E, p. 30-33. I, pp. 104-106; 219-233.
- 396 RC 2,9.
- 397 GE 9,4,9; 15,8,2; 17,3,7; 22,2,4; 22,3,8.
- 398 RC 9,20. LP: *Rules*, p. 18.
- 399 GE 21,3,8.
- 400 GE 21,2,8; 22,3,8; cf. 15,6,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 202.
- 401 Per Poutet 1995, p. 63.
- 402 RC 2,9. MR 202,1,2.
- 403 RC 2,9. GE 17,3,7. MR 206,2,1.
- 404 GE 11,2,8.
- 405 GE 17,2,13. LP: *Conduct*, p. 167.
- 406 MR 198,3,2. MF 114,1,2.
- 407 MF180,3,2.
- 408 MF 160,3,2; 175,2,1; 180,3,2. MR 197,1 and 2; 198,3,2.
- 409 MR 194,2,2 and 3,2; 196,2,2; 198,3,2; 200,3,2.
- 410 MR 198,2,2; 200,3,1.
- 411 MR 196,2,1.

- 412 MF 122,1,2; 125,3,2. RM 2,1.
- 413 DA 405,4,6. DC 20,3,9. I ,p 12. MD 62,1,2; 116,2,2; 186,2,2. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 233.
- 414 DC 44,24,10. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 499.
- 415 GE 1,1,9. LP: *Conduct*, p. 49.
- 416 GE 1,2,8. LP: *Conduct*, p. 50.
- 417 GE 18,1,4.
- 418 GE 15,8,5; 21,3,17. RB 8,7.
- 419 RC 2,9. DA 307,2,12 and 307,2,13.
- 420 C 20,11; cf, 19,19; 18,8.
- 421 Magaz, *Lasalliana* 09-7-A-48.
- 422 MF 122,1,2. MR 202,2,2; 206,2,1.
- 423 GE 7,1,5. E 2; 8; 1,10 and 1,11, etc.
- 424 GE 2,1,7; 7,1,2; 22,3,3. E 1,5,1; 1,5,2; 6,4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 52.
- 425 P. 344.
- 426 DA 402,2,7.
- 427 DA 201,2,8. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 63.
- 428 E 1,2; 1,6; 1,12; 2,2; 6,1; 6,3; 6,5; 8,2, etc. GE 7,1,4. LP: *Religious Instruction*, p. 180.
- 429 GE 7,1,3; 17,3,7.
- 430 GE 7,3,3.
- 431 MR 204: 1,1 and 1,2. GE 15,7,8; 15,7,18; 15,9,10.
- 432 GE 21,3,5; 17,3,6.
- 433 RC 7,7. GE 8;22,4,8. E 2,20-21.
- 434 RC 10,2. GE 8,7; 9,5; 15,1,22.
- 435 GE 22,4,6; 22,3,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 203.
- 436 GE 22,4,9.
- 437 RC 7,6. Cf. GE 9,1,1. MF 159,3,2; 159,1,2. MR 200,1,2; 206,1,1. C 28,5. LP: *Rules*, p. 37.
- 438 MR 200,1,1.
- 439 RC 7,6; 28,7-8. E 7,2,1 and 7,2,2. GE 9,1.
- 440 GE 9,3,4 and 9,3,5.
- 441 MR 193,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 433.
- 442 GE 7,2,1. E 2,7-2,8. Miserere: Psalm 51, which in Latin begins with this word. LP: *Conduct*, p. 93.
- 443 MD 33,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 92.
- 444 GE 7,2,4. E 9.
- 445 No citation in original text. LP: *Conduct*, p. 93.
- 446 GE 9,3,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 109.
- 447 P. 83.
- 448 Perhaps a reference to Jesus teaching in the synagogue (translator).

- 449 DC 20,4,9. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 388.
- 450 MF 92,3,1; 91,3,1. MR 194,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 389.
- 451 7, 4 and 5. LP: *Rules*, p. 36-37.
- 452 No citation in original text.
- 453 C 100.
- 454 Cartier, p. 63.
- 455 *Lasalliana* 15-11-C-58.
- 456 GE 1720, p 33; GE 3,8,1.
- 457 GE 1,4; 1,5; 1,8.
- 458 GE 19,0,1; 3,5,7.
- 459 GE 11,1,6; 15,9,15.
- 460 GE 4,2,24 and 4,2,25. LP: *Conduct*, p. 74.
- 461 GE, 6,0,2.
- 462 GE 16,1,9; 16,1,10; 16,1,11; 16,1,12.
- 463 GE 18,1; 18,2; 18,4; 18,5.
- 464 GE 24,1,1; 24,2,3.
- 465 GE 14,1,3.
- 466 FV 2,0,1-2,0,2.
- 467 1995, pp. 148-149.
- 468 MR 195,3,1.
- 469 MF 171,1,1; 189,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 318.
- 470 MF 159,2,2; 107,1,2; 129,2,2; 148,2,2. MR 196,1,2; 200,1,2. C 73,5, etc. LP: *Meditations*, p. 293.
- 471 C 56,7.
- 472 RC 30,1; 27,15 and 22. LP: *Rules*, pp. 112; 100-101.
- 473 RC 27,27. MF 91,3 and 92. MR 193-208, particularly 205 and 206. LP: *Rules*, p. 102.
- 474 C 49,6. LP: *Letters*, p. 180.
- 475 CT 11,1,1. LP: *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, p. 26.
- 476 MF 170,2,2; 192,1,2. RC 2,3.
- 477 RC 2,9. MR 202,1,2.
- 478 MR 202,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 456.
- 479 MD 69,1,2; 37,2,1. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 151 and 98.
- 480 MD 33,2,1; 39,2,2; 69,1,2. MF 91,3,1; 153,3,2.
- 481 MF 115,3,2; 101,3,2; cf. 157,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 213 and 187.
- 482 P. 92.
- 483 Pp. 392-393.
- 484 P. 213.
- 485 P. 6558.

- 486 P. 118.
- 487 P. 268.
- 488 P. 118.
- 489 P. 57.
- 490 1974, p. 62.
- 491 Giufirda, p. 279.
- 492 P. 213.
- 493 P. 407.
- 494 Airès, pp. 5-6.
- 495 Pp. 77-78; 106; 171; 220.
- 496 Per Jolibert, p. 121.
- 497 MH 0,0,15. LP: *Rules*, p. 184.
- 498 RC 1,3. "A suitable education" was understood, in the language of the time, as education according to his socio-economic situation. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 499 MR 206,1,1.
- 500 MF 92,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 389.
- 501 1995, p. 85.
- 502 GE 25,3,1,35. Cf. 15,6,39. LP: *Conduct*, p. 266.
- 503 MD 33,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 91.
- 504 MD 33,1,3.
- 505 Cf. MR 202,3,2. GE 15,66.
- 506 GE 13,0,1.
- 507 GE 13,1; 22,1.
- 508 P. 9.
- 509 P. 130.
- 510 GE 13, 4.
- 511 No citation in original text. LP: *Conduct*, p. 249.
- 512 *Laslliana* 14-7-A-60.
- 513 GE 13,2; 13,3.
- 514 13,4 and 13, 6.
- 515 1951. Introduction, p 32.
- 516 Cf. Blain II, p. 32.
- 517 1995, p. 85.
- 518 GE 22,2,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 201.
- 519 GE 21,2,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 194.
- 520 GE 5,0,23.
- 521 MR 197,2,2; 206,1,1. MF 91,3,1. MR 198,2,2; 200,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 442, 465, 387, 451.
- 522 Maillefer, p. 71.

- 523 21,2,12. LP: *Conduct*, p. 194.
- 524 Maillefer, p. 71.
- 525 GE 19,0,0-6 to 19,0,0-8.
- 526 Poutet-Pungier, p. 64.
- 527 DA 106,0,1; 206,0; 206,11; 307,1,12; 307,4,7; 310,3,6. MR 203,1,160. Cf. MD 2,3,2.
- 528 DA 206,0,4.
- 529 Blain II, p. 32.
- 530 MF 91,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 387.
- 531 1 Thess 5:14.
- 532 MR 198,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 444.
- 533 MD 33,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 91.
- 534 15,6.
- 535 1995, p. 186.
- 536 *Lassalliana* 18-4-A-70.
- 537 GE 16,2.
- 538 GE 15,6,38.
- 539 GE 15,6,39 Cf. GE 1720, p. 167, where it says, "about two weeks." LP: *Conduct*, p. 150.
- 540 Per Larroyo, p. 519.
- 541 1951, p. 163.
- 542 GE 21,2,12. Bold ours.
- 543 GE 18.
- 544 GE 18,3,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 250.
- 545 GE 18,9,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 253.
- 546 GE 18,6,5.
- 547 MD 33,3,1. MR 198,1,2; 206,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 443-444; 92; 465.
- 548 GE 25,3,0. LP: *Conduct*, p. 264.
- 549 P. 67.
- 550 23,1,1; 7,2,1; 5,0,22; 9,2,7; 15,9,15. LP: *Conduct*, p. 206.
- 551 GE 24,2.
- 552 4,10,28. LP: *Conduct*, p. 86.
- 553 GE 15,0,11. LP: *Conduct*, p. 136.
- 554 GE 212,3,12.
- 555 GE 3,10,2; GE 4,3,4. Cf. 4,5,1; 4,5,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 75.
- 556 GE 3,1,10. LP: *Conduct*, p. 58.
- 557 15,9,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 154.
- 558 15,3,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 141.
- 559 Mt 7:1-37.

- 560 MD 64,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 140.
- 561 GE 25,2,9,8.
- 562 GE 4,6,3; 4,7,1; 4,8,2; 4,10. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 78-80.
- 563 4.9.
- 564 GE 6,0,4.
- 565 GE 9,1,1; cf. 4,3,2.
- 566 GE 22,4,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 203.
- 567 GE 4,1,2. Cf. Poutet 1995, p. 197. LP: *Conduct*, p. 72.
- 568 23,4,11. LP: *Conduct*, p. 78.
- 569 GE 24,6,2 and 3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 62.
- 570 GE, 16,1,15. LP: *Conduct*, p. 158.
- 571 GE 16,1,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 157.
- 572 GE 22,3,1-22,3,2; 22,4,7. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 201 and 203.
- 573 GE 3,3,3; cf. 3,5,9; 3,6,4.
- 574 GE 15,2,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 140.
- 575 Poutet 1970 I, p. 145.
- 576 *Lasalliana* 19-4-A-75.
- 577 Poutet 1995, p. 219.
- 578 Zind 1974, p. 73.
- 579 Pp. 263, 264.
- 580 P. 171.
- 581 Sandin, p. 75; Willot, p. 119.
- 582 P. 954.
- 583 P. 68.
- 584 Cf. Justo, p. 327.
- 585 MF 177,1,1; 180,2,2; 186,1,1. MR 194,1,1. RC 1,6.
- 586 CT 11,2,5-11,2,9.
- 587 MD 15,2,2. Cf. EM 0,14,284. CT 7,2,8.
- 588 Cf. C 18,10.
- 589 No citation in original text.
- 590 Poutet 1970 II, p. 373.
- 591 GE 15,0,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 135.
- 592 RC 1,3. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 593 1,3 LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 594 MR196,3,1, Jn 10:10.
- 595 GE 15,9,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 154.
- 596 7,1.

- 597 GE 14,1,5.
- 598 GE 4,4,14; 6,0,2.
- 599 GE 3,10,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 71.
- 600 GE 6,0,1; 4,4,14; 23,3,11.
- 601 GE 6,0,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 90.
- 602 GE 4,4,14; cf. 23,3,11. LP: *Conduct*, p. 211.
- 603 DB 3,23,8.
- 604 MF 160,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 296.
- 605 P. 80.
- 606 Pp. 66, 67; 82 n. 23.
- 607 No citation in original text.
- 608 DA 104,3,5. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 36.
- 609 DA 405,5,6. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 355.
- 610 No citation in original text.
- 611 That is, in the non-clerical, non-religious world.
- 612 Prévot 1964, pp. 13-14.
- 613 MR 194,1.
- 614 GE 22,2,3.
- 615 GE 16,2,18; 16,2,21.
- 616 *Lasalliana* 19-4-A-75.
- 617 Blain I, 389.
- 618 GE 16,2,21. LP: *Conduct*, p. 161.
- 619 *Lasalliana* 04-7-A-25.
- 620 The writing trades or professions: literally, of the (writing) pen.
- 621 Marey, year 1, session 1, of talks given at the French Lasallian Center in Paris.
- 622 Anselme 1951. Introduction, p. 28.
- 623 Poutet 1995, p. 204.
- 624 I, p. 260.
- 62 GE 18,2.
- 626 5,0,21-5,0,23, etc.
- 627 Pp. 147-148.
- 628 Dictionaries of the time, and even later, offer “to show” as a synonym for to teach. “Showing Geography” is in Richelet.
- 629 *Lasalliana* 04-7-A-25.
- 630 GE 4,10,29. LP: *Conduct*, p. 86.
- 631 GE 4,9,28. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 81-82.
- 632 The catechism class taught by a member of the religious community to the other members of the community who, after acting as “students,” spoke with the “teacher,” making corrections, if necessary, or giving suggestions.
- 633 P. 109.

- 634 P. 94.
- 635 The thesis of the “moderns” who split ways from them “ancients,” who were adept at the Greek and Roman classics and their imitation.
- 636 P. 84.
- 637 P. 92.
- 638 P. 92.
- 639 P. 232. Cf. GE 6.
- 640 P. 232. CF GE 4; especially 4,9,5 and 4,9,6.
- 641 II, p. 348.
- 642 P. 21.
- 643 In the analysis of this characteristic of Lasallian education, *effectiveness* is considered the achievement of the set objectives and *efficiency* the use of the best means and the best use of the means to achieve them.
- 644 MF 146,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 268.
- 645 MF 157,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 203.
- 646 CT 7,2,7. Cf. EMO 9,227. LP: *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, p. 11.
- 647 19, 329. LP: *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer*, p. 151.
- 648 CT 146,18.
- 649 DA 307,3,9. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 152.
- 650 C 15:8-9. The original text mistakenly refers to this as De La Salle’s letter of August 15, 1704 to Brother Gabriel. LP: *Letters*, p. 67.
- 651 C 99,4. LP: *Letters*, p. 215.
- 652 MF 148,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 272.
- 653 MF 91,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 387.
- 654 II, p.52.
- 655 The inspector charged with applying the weights and measures and taxation of food goods.
- 656 Charged with the “cult” money.
- 657 Maillefer, p. 124.
- 658 Blain II, p. 334.
- 659 MF 150,2,1.
- 660 Pp. 271-274, especially p. 272.
- 661 MR 195,3,1; 205-206.
- 662 RC 1,4-5. LP: *Rules*, p. 14.
- 663 II, p. 358.
- 664 Blain II, p. 358.
- 665 C 11,25; cf. 25,6; 27,12;28,28, 57,10; 58:16 and 20. LP: *Letters*, p. 26.
- 666 C 31,18; 28,26. LP: *Letters*, pp. 115 and 105.
- 667 C 37,2. LP: *Letters*, p. 45.
- 668 C 29,11. LP: *Letters*, p. 108.
- 669 C 9,9. LP: *Letters*, p. 159.

- 670 C 56,8. LP: *Letters*, p. 145.
- 671 GE 16,2,15.
- 672 GE 15,4,6; 15,6,39.
- 673 GE 24,2,2.
- 674 C 58,16. LP: *Letters*, p. 150.
- 675 D 1,128. Cf. CT 8,2,21.
- 676 RC 11,1. LP: *Rules*, p. 52.
- 677 I, 278.
- 678 C 57,12. LP: *Letters*, p. 146.
- 679 C 75,8; cf. 34,18. LP: *Letters*, p. 162.
- 680 C 58, 20. LP: *Letters*, p. 150.
- 681 C 16,3. LP: *Letters*, p. 68.
- 682 1988, 3.
- 683 II, p. 361.
- 684 1951, Introduction, p. 7.
- 685 I, p. 289.
- 686 Blain II, pp. 24-25.
- 687 GE 11,0,1. Cf. RC 7,2.
- 688 1970 I, p. 744.
- 689 GE 11,0,1. LP: *Conduct*, p. 118.
- 690 GE 21,2,7. LP: *Conduct*, p. 194.
- 691 GE 7,4,13; 8,4,1; 8,7,7. MR 20,2,2.
- 692 GE 8,4,2; 8,1,9.
- 693 GE 4,10,9.
- 694 GE 18,7.
- 695 C 55,16. Cf. GE 11,0,1. LP: *Letters*, p. 142.
- 696 C 55,17. LP: *Letters*, p. 142.
- 697 2,10. LP: *Rules*, p. 19.
- 698 MF 186,3,2.
- 699 I, p. 262.
- 700 P. 126.
- 701 CT 5.
- 702 P. 67.
- 703 MR 197-198.
- 704 *Lasalliana* 07-4-A-38.
- 705 1970, I, p. 744.
- 706 "Fraternal Education."

- 707 MR 204,3,2. GE 15,0,1; 15,2,11; 15,4,3; 15,4,17; 15,6,44; 15,9,5.
- 708 GE 15,4,3; 15,9,7.
- 709 GE 15,6,38; 15,6,44; 15,9,1. LP: *Conduct*, p. 154.
- 710 GE 15,6,18-15,6,24. MR 204,3,2.
- 711 0,0,10. LP: *Rules*, p. 183.
- 712 GE 12,6,3.
- 713 12,6,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 127.
- 714 GE 17,3,3.
- 715 0,0,63. LP: *Rules*, p. 191.
- 716 C 54,9. LP: *Letters*, p. 140.
- 717 16,2,34.
- 718 GE 22,4,5; cf. 22,3,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 203.
- 719 GE 22,4,9; 22,4,2. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 203- 204.
- 720 16.
- 721 16,2,16. Cf. 9,22.
- 722 16,2,6.
- 723 GE 14,1,2; 14,1,3; 16,4,5; 16,4,4; cf. 24,2,4; 24,2,5.
- 724 C 12,25; cf. 57,11. GE 22,3,2; 12,6,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 201.
- 725 C 98,6. LP: *Letters*, p. 214.
- 726 GE 21,2,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 194.
- 727 GE 18,6,4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 173.
- 728 C 9,10. LP: *Letters*, p. 159.
- 729 I, p. 579.
- 730 GE 8,4,3; 15,6,17; 23,1,6; 7,4,2-7,4,4; 8,4,2.
- 731 GE 23,2,11. LP: *Conduct*, p. 57.
- 732 GE 23,5,10; 17,0,1; 22,4; 7,2,3; 24,0,1.
- 733 *Lasalliana* 03-7-A-19.
- 734 GE 11,2,1; cf. 15,2,7. RC 9,10. LP: *Conduct*, p. 121.
- 735 C 69,18. LP: *Letters*, p. 148.
- 736 GE 11,01.
- 737 GE 1,1,10; 11,3,11.
- 738 GE 15,3,12; 15,4,15.
- 739 GE 11,3,8. LP: *Conduct*, p. 122.
- 740 GE 2,2,13. LP: *Conduct*, p. 55.
- 741 GE 15,1,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 138.
- 742 GE 11,3,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 121.
- 743 RC 9,11. Cf. GE 11,3,9; 9,1,12; 9,1,13; 9,3,2; 21,2,20.

- 744 GE 15,1,5; GE 15,9,9.
- 745 GE 11,3,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 121.
- 746 Blain II, p. 11, 12, 25. cf. *Report on Various Things*, p. 100.
- 747 GE 23,1,9; cf. 23,1,10. LP: *Conduct*, p. 207.
- 748 According to Poutet 1970, I, p. 542.
- 749 A small wooden instrument used by the Lasallian teacher to communicate orders through sounds and prescribed signs. The signal “is made of two hard-wood rods: one large one, wider near the end, and the other small, pressed against the larger part by a small cord wrapped around it. Lowering and raising the small rod, it hits the end of the large rod and emits a quick click” (Anselme 1951, p. 125; cf. GE 12,0,4).
- 750 12,0,1-12,0,2. The “first” edition (p. 124) lacks “a great number of signs.” LP: *Conduct*, p. 123.
- 751 C 39,7.
- 752 GE 12,1-12,7; 12,1,1; 12,2,2; 12,2,3; 12,3,4; 12,4,2; 12,6,4.
- 753 P. 160.
- 754 Cf. Blain I, pp. 290, 364, 380-381.
- 755 C 56,5. LP: *Letters*, p. 143.
- 756 C 11,14. LP: *Letters*, p. 26.
- 757 Blain I, p. 290.
- 758 D 1,27. Cf. CT 8,2,20.
- 759 MF 92,3,1.
- 760 MR 206,1,2.
- 761 GE 15,9,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 154.
- 762 GE 17,2,16. LP: *Conduct*, p. 168.
- 763 GE 17,2,1. RC 10,12. LP: *Conduct*, p. 166.
- 764 GE 23,5,10; 21,2,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 215.
- 765 GE 18,10,4.
- 766 GE 12,6,3.
- 767 GE 21,2,1; 21,2,2; 21,2,5; 21,2,18.
- 768 1951. Introduction, pp. 28, 29.
- 769 *Lasalliana* 04-7-A-25.
- 770 GE 9.3.4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 108.
- 771 GE 9,5,8. LP: *Conduct*, p. 111.
- 772 Per Gallego 1994, p. 135.
- 773 Cf. GE 4,9,6.
- 774 GE 23,2,1; cf. 3,1,3-3,1,7; 24,2,6.
- 775 GE 3,1,2; 24,3, etc.
- 776 Pp. 40-41.
- 777 GE 4,5; 4,4.
- 778 GE 5,0,15. LP: *Conduct*, p. 88.
- 779 GE 4,9,8.

- 780 GE 3,2,13. LP: *Conduct*, p. 62.
- 781 GE 4,1,1. LP: *Conduct*, p. 72.
- 782 Cf. Justo, p. 115, n. 7.
- 783 GE 22,4,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 204.
- 784 GE 4,8,10. LP: *Conduct*, p. 80
- 785 GE 4,10,6; 9,1,12. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 82-83.
- 786 1951, 28.
- 787 I, p. 397.
- 788 LP: *Conduct*, p. 106.
- 789 GE 9,2,1; 5,0,12; 3,5,6; 3,7,11; 9,2,3, etc.
- 790 Blain II, pp. 69-70.
- 791 GE 3,7,10; 4,9,8; 5,0,11; 5,0,21; 9,3,1; 9,3,1; 9,5,9.
- 792 RC 1,6. MR 194,1,1. GE 9,1,14.
- 793 GE 21,3,2; 24,2,2. MF 193,3,2.
- 794 GE 3,6,5-3,6,7. CT 12,2,8. Bold ours. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 67-68 and LP: *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, p. 80.
- 795 C 56,9. GE 20,0,1; 21,1,5; 24,2; 24,2,1. LP: *Letters*, p. 145.
- 796 GE 3,1,26; cf. 24,1,3.
- 797 GE 24,1,5.
- 798 GE 24,2,1.
- 799 GE 3,1,26. LP: *Conduct*, p. 60.
- 800 GE 4,9,8; 4,10,10; 4,10,2.
- 801 GE 24,0,1; 3,1,25.
- 802 GE 3,2,12.
- 803 GE 11,1,5. Cf. 11,2,9. LP: *Conduct*, p. 119.
- 804 GE 4,10,4. LP: *Conduct*, p. 82.
- 805 55 GE 4,10,12; 4,10,29.
- 806 GE 5,0,11; 6,0,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 88.
- 807 GE 3,1,26. LP: *Conduct*, p. 60.
- 808 I, p. 284.
- 809 3,1,31. LP: *Conduct*, p. 61.
- 810 GE 2,3,2; 9,3,5.
- 811 RC 7,13.
- 812 GE 14,1,1; 16,2,6.
- 813 GE 3,1,31; 16,2,6.
- 814 GE 18,12,7; 18,9,13.
- 815 GE 9,3,12. LP: *Conduct*, p. 109.
- 816 MF 152,1,2. Bold mine. LP: *Meditations*, p. 282.
- 817 C 38,5; 33,1; 49,6; 51,4. LP: *Letters*, pp. 49, 34.

- 818 CT 10,1,1. LP: *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, p. 24.
- 819 LP: *Letters*, p. 34.
- 820 MR 205: "The teacher will give an account to God for the way in which he has carried out his work." MR 206: "Things for which a Brother of the Christian Schools will have to give an account to God related to his work."
- 821 GE 16,2,24; 115,3,7; 20.
- 822 C 31,18; 12,15. LP: *Letters*, pp. 115 and 30.
- 823 GE 16,2,23.
- 824 GE 13,1,14.
- 825 GE 21,2,16.
- 826 9,6. Cf. Anselme 1951, p. 107.
- 827 GE 9,6,10. LP: *Conduct*, p. 238.
- 828 Cf. Blain I, p. 296.
- 829 1980, 31.
- 830 Pp. 114-115.
- 831 P. 213.
- 832 Parias, pp. 440, 441.
- 833 P. 786.
- 834 P. 236.
- 835 P. 255. Cf. 41-42.
- 836 1951, p. 86.
- 837 1950, p. 99.
- 838 P. 221.
- 839 1951, p. 131.
- 840 "Good points": cards marked with points with which the student could, at the end of the year, "buy" more or less showy prizes, according to the value of the cards received during the year. "Privileges": "credits" that allowed them to pay off punishments for faults committed.
- 841 RC 7,3; 11,1. GE 7,3,9; 15,9,6; 17,0,1; 20,1,4; 21,2,18; 9,3,13; 15,2,9.
- 842 GE 22,3,6.
- 843 Pp. 76-77.
- 844 I, p. 309.
- 845 P. 40.
- 846 I, pp. 240-241.
- 847 1st year, 2nd session.
- 848 MD 39,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 102.
- 849 P. 40.
- 850 LP: *Rules*, p. 203.
- 851 Blain I, p. 312.
- 852 LP: *Rules*, p. 204.

- 853 Blain I, p. 344. Bold ours.
- 854 Blain I, p. 348.
- 855 1995, p. 205.
- 856 C 112,3. LP: *Letters*, p. 128.
- 857 MF 91,2,3. LP: *Meditations*, p. 386.
- 858 MF 180,1,2.
- 859 Cf. Blain I, p. 234.
- 860 Poutet 1999 (CL 43), p. 192.
- 861 Per Blain II, p. 51.
- 862 Cf. Blain I, pp. 240-241, Maillefer, p. 40.
- 863 I, p. 241.
- 864 RC 7,13. Cf. MD 33,2,1. MF 134,2,2.
- 865 MD 65,2,1.
- 866 MF 115,3,2; 101,3,2; cf. 157,3,2.
- 867 MR 201,3,1.
- 868 MR 198,2,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 444.
- 869 Blain I, p. 379.
- 870 Blain II, p. 335.
- 871 Braido, p. 141.
- 872 MR 201,2,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 453.
- 873 Cf. Rigault IV, pp. 338-414.
- 874 GE 4,10,18.
- 875 P. 76.
- 876 GE 15,7,16, 16,2,10. GE 15.0.1-15,0,23.
- 877 MF 101,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p.187.
- 878 GE 16,2,16; 15,0,3-15,0,5; 15,0,22-15,0,23.
- 879 GE 15,0,6.
- 880 GE 25,4,15.
- 881 GE 25,2,4,1; cf. 15,2,7. LP: *Conduct*, p. 258.
- 882 Pp. 146-147.
- 883 Cf. Rigault V, p. 241; IV, p. 393.
- 884 P. 222.
- 885 MD 33,2,1.
- 886 II. *Report on Various Things*, pp. 100-101.
- 887 No citation in original text.
- 888 In one of his catechism (DA 206,0,5).
- 889 GE 15,1,20.

- 890 Per Anselme 1951, p. 150.
- 891 Pp. 60-61
- 892 Schmidt, K.A. *Geschichte der Erziehung vom Anfang bis auf Unsere Zeit*. Vol. 3 Stuttgart, 1884-1901, p. 146.
- 893 *Epistoli Joanis Ravisi Testoris*. Rothmagi, 1597. Epist. XXIII.
- 894 P. 119
- 895 The title of the heir of the king of France, during the king's lifetime.
- 896 P. 780.
- 897 203 and 204.
- 898 MR 202,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 454.
- 899 MR 203,1,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 456.
- 900 MR 204,3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 461.
- 901 Proverbs 12:1; 23:13; 29:15; cf. 3:11; 6:23; 15:32, etc.
- 902 1 Sam 3:13. 2 Sam 12:1-15. Mt 6:2-5; 21:12. I Cor 5:5. 1 Tm 5:20, etc.
- 903 1951, 157.
- 904 *Lasalliana* 09-6-A-47. Cf. GE 15,9,3.
- 905 P. 76.
- 906 GE 15,6,1.
- 907 GE 15,6.
- 908 MR 204,1,1.
- 909 RC 8,1. GE 15,1,15; 15,2,1; 15,2,8. LP: *Rules*, p. 41.
- 910 15,3,6; cf. 15,4,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 141.
- 911 GE 15,3,7; 15,3,9; cf. 15,4,4; 15,4,13; 15,4,14; 15,1,9; 15,1,10; 15,1,11, etc. LP: *Conduct*, p. 142.
- 912 GE 15,3,3. RC 8,4. C 11,16.
- 913 GE 24,6,15. LP: *Conduct*, p. 233.
- 914 C 11,26; 54,10; 57,9; 98,3. LP: *Letters*, p. 214.
- 915 RC 8, 5 and 6.
- 916 RC 8,8. LP: *Rules*, p. 43.
- 917 Titus 1:10, 13.
- 918 GE 15,9,9. LP: *Conduct*, p. 154.
- 919 RC 8,9-11. GE 15,5.
- 920 CT 6. GE 15,3. MR 203-204.
- 921 GE 15,2,7; 15,2,8. LP: *Conduct*, p. 140.
- 922 GE 15,9,1. LP: *Conduct*, p. 154.
- 923 Blain II, *Report on Various Things*, p.101.
- 924 2nd year, 3rd session.
- 925 Blain II, *Report on Various Things*, p. 102
- 926 Blain, *Report on Various Things*, p. 101.

- 927 *Lasalliana* 18-4-A-70.
- 928 Per Rigault II, p. 592, n. 3.
- 929 1951, p. 150.
- 930 GE 15,6,1; 15,6,4, etc.
- 931 1996, p. 62.
- 932 MR 198,3,2.
- 933 E, 9,2,5.
- 934 P. 84.
- 93 RU 203, 1,170.
- 936 Preface, p. 5.
- 937 RU 103,1,35; 104,1,41; 204,10,330; 205,1,354; 206,1,419; 206,1,424, etc.
- 938 RU 102,1,27; 202,1,152; 204,9,313; 207,1,499; 207,1,511, etc.
- 939 RU 111,1,109.
- 940 GE 18,0,1. LP: *Conduct*, p. 170.
- 941 GE 15,6,13; 16,2,6; 16,2,9.
- 942 GE 15,9,26; cf. 16,2,39.
- 943 LP: *Conduct*, pp. 177-178.
- 944 E 9, 14.
- 945 GE 15,8,5.
- 946 GE 15,9,12; 15,9,25.
- 947 8,5,2; 11,2,6; 18,13,4-18,13,5; 18,4,2; 18,14,3.
- 948 GE 11,2,6; 18,14,3.
- 949 GE 1,1,5; 10,3,8.
- 950 GE 18,9,7. LP: *Meditations*, p. 252.
- 951 1951, p. 220.
- 952 LP: *Conduct*, p. 106.
- 953 GE 9,2,3; 9,2,9; 3,2,10.
- 954 GE 23,1,2.
- 955 GE 23,2,8.
- 956 GE 3,3,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 65.
- 957 *Lasalliana* 07-5-A-39. Cf. GE 3,1,29-3,1,31; 24,1,1.
- 958 24,1,2.
- 959 GE 1,1,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 49.
- 960 GE 2,2,8; 2,2,9; 2,2,11-2,2,12.
- 961 GE 9,5,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 111.
- 962 *Revue d'Histoire de l'Église de France*, 1973, No. 1, pp. 198-199.
- 963 GE 22,3,3; Cf. 2,1,7.

- 964 GE 18,3. LP: *Conduct*, p. 250.
- 965 P. 8. LP: *Conduct*, p. 52
- 966 GE 18,3; 2,1,6; GE 1720, p. 7.
- 967 GE 2,1,2.
- 968 P. 84.
- 969 *Lasalliana* 07-4-A-39.
- 970 GE 2,1,2.
- 971 Viguerie. In: *XVIIe Siècle*, No. 129, p. 389.
- 972 Rendu, p. 156.
- 973 1951, p. 217.
- 974 *Lasalliana* 18-4-A-70.
- 975 Poutet 1970 I, p. 111; II, p. 41.
- 976 Poutet 1970 II, p. 71.
- 977 Blain II, 33.
- 978 RC 9,18-9,19.
- 979 GE 17,2,4; 17,2,9; 17,2,10.
- 980 7,3,9. LP: *Conduct*, p. 95.
- 981 GE 1720, pp. 34-35. LP: *Conduct*, p. 67.
- 982 At the beginning of his presence in Rome, Brother Gabriel was accompanied by another Brother, who had returned to France.
- 983 C 30,2. Recall that Marseille is the capital of Provence, where they spoke the “langue d’oc,” different from French, practiced on the Île-de-France, that is, basically Paris and its surrounds. LP: *Letters*, p. 111.
- 984 Cf. Blain I, p. 134. Cf. Bernard, p. 54.
- 985 MF 170, 3,2. LP: *Meditations*, p. 317.
- 986 Maillefer, p. 111.
- 987 MR 201,2,1.
- 988 MR 193,2,2; 205,3,1.
- 989 Blain II, p. 29.
- 990 Blain I, pp. 382, 396; II, pp. 16,17,70.
- 991 RC 9, 18.
- 992 RC 8,0,1.
- 993 RC 8,7,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 103.
- 994 DB 4,4,6-4,4,8. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, pp. 352-353.
- 995 8,7,8. LP: *Conduct*, p. 103.
- 996 GE 22,4,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 203.
- 997 GE 17,3,6. LP: *Conduct*, p. 168.
- 998 GE 16,1,10.
- 999 9,6.

- 1000 P. 109. LP: *Conduct*, p. 111.
- 1001 GE 9,5,2; 14,1,9, etc. Cf. Poutet 1970 I, pp. 271-272; 354.
- 1002 GE 8,7,5.
- 1003 MR 193,2,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 433.
- 1004 MR 193,2,1; 194,1,1. RC 1,4. GE 15,6,11. LP: *Meditations*, p. 434.
- 1005 MD 41,3,2; Cf. Mr. 193,2,1; 194,1. RC 1,4. LP: *Meditations*, p. 105.
- 1006 MD 37,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 98.
- 1007 GE 16,2,18.
- 1008 GE 16,2,27-16,2,28.
- 1009 GE 13,4,2.
- 1010 GE 15,6,11. LP: *Conduct*, p. 146.
- 1011 GE 15,6,26-15,6,27. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 148-149.
- 1012 GE 23,1,6.
- 1013 GE 3,9,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 70.
- 1014 DA 206,0,7. DB 2,6,1. I 4,4,3; 4,4,4. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, pp. 75-76.
- 1015 MD 61,3,1. MR 200,3,2; 202,1,2. Cf. MF 186,1,2. LP: *Meditations*, pp. 135, 451 and 454.
- 1016 E 9,2,4; 9,4,1. LP: *Religious Instruction*, pp. 147 and 200.
- 1017 E 3,1; 9,14.
- 1018 MR 203,2,1.
- 1019 DA 206,0,4. DB 3,23,7-3,23,8. I 4,4,1-4,4,2. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 75.
- 1020 Surprising for those who do not know that in the 17th century, and even later, *nourrir* in French meant, among other things, raise, educate. Racine, in *Bajazet*, uses the verb in this sense: "Raised [*nourri*] in the brothel, I know its intrigues." In *Furetière* is found this: "Children must be educated [*nourrir*] in the fear of God, in the love of letters of virtue." And also in *Flaubert*: "Happiness, though raised [*nourrie*] in incivility..."
- 1021 DA 206,0,4. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 75.
- 1022 DA 206,0,5. DB 3,23,8. I 2,7,13; 4,4,2.
- 1023 DA 206,0,5; cf. 309,2,10.
- 1024 DA 310,2,5. DB 3,23,7. DA 310,2,7. DB 3,23,8. LP: *Duties of a Christian*, p. 343.
- 1025 MR 193,2,1.
- 1026 MR 199,1,1; cf. 203,3,1. LP: *Meditations*, p. 446.
- 1027 De La Salle used the verb *to substitute* (MD 61,3,2. MR 193,2,2). Regarding the corresponding noun, Poutet (1995, p. 154, n. 1) observed that "the word 'substitute' designated, in 17th-century France, people who today we call "proxies," to say someone who acts in the name of another. But this word (proxy), in the era, designated only those having powers conferred by the Pope to act in his name. De La Salle could not use it to refer to parents. But today this is the precise word to translate his thinking."
- 1028 Morales II, p. 264.
- 1029 I 5,6,43. LP: *Conduct*, p. 150.
- 1030 GE 22,2,1; cf. 9,6,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 200.
- 1031 GE 22,3; 22,3,5. LP: *Conduct*, p. 202.
- 1032 GE 16,2,33-16,2,36. LP: *Conduct*, pp. 162-163.

- 1033 GE 24,2,2.
- 1034 GE 4,10,18; cf. 15,1,15; 24,2,2. LP: *Conduct*, p. 85.
- 1035 I, p. 401. Cf. Sauvage, p. 679, n. 1.
- 1036 GE 23,4,3.
- 1037 GE 13,4,6; 13,4,7.
- 1038 GE 16,3,6-16,3,7. Cf. 16,2,22. LP: *Conduct*, p. 164.
- 1039 GE 15,4,6.
- 1040 GE 16,1,14. LP: *Conduct*, p. 158.
- 1041 GE 16,1,9; 16,1,12; 13,1,16. LP: *Conduct*, p. 241.
- 1042 GE 22,4,14.
- 1043 GE 4,2,2.
- 1044 GE 22,4,18.
- 1045 GE 16,2,30.
- 1046 GE 16,2,38. LP: *Conduct*, p. 163.
- 1047 GE, particularly 16,2,18-16,2,21.
- 1048 GE 22,4,12.
- 1049 GE 16,2,20.
- 1050 Blain II, *Report on Various Things*, p. 100.
- 1051 Poutet 1995, pp.176, 156-158.
- 1052 As, to practice spelling, the texts copied were administrative papers, making clean copies at home should also have a benefit to the family, Fiévet observed (p. 187).
- 1053 GE 2,2,6; 4,7,4; 6,0,5; 15,9,18; 17,3,3.
- 1054 GE 16,3,11.
- 1055 GE 21,2,16. LP: *Conduct*, p. 195.
- 1056 RC 20,9,15. GE 16,3,8; 21,2,16. LP: *Rules*, p. 80.
- 1057 RC 19,11.
- 1058 GE 16,3,9.
- 1059 RC 7,11. Cf. C 56,12. MF 153,2,2 and 153,3,2. MR 207,2,2.
- 1060 Maillefer, pp. 198, 210.
- 1061 Blain II, pp. 10, 38.
- 1062 MF 101,3,2. Bold mine. LP: *Meditations*, p. 187.
- 1063 Cole, p. 366.
- 1064 Savino, p. 18.
- 1065 P. 177.
- 1066 P. 977.
- 1067 P. 78. Reformed Christians (Protestants) converted to Catholicism.
- 1068 MF 160,3,2. p. 234.
- 1069 P. 358.