

# Rule and Foundational Documents

raison, ils garderont l'ordre que leur sera été  
prescrit par le frere superior ou Directeur  
Enfin ils tiendront toujours leurs habits  
propres et nets et ils les porteront avec la decence  
et la modestie qui convient avec personne  
de leur profession

## Regles qui regardent le bon ordre et la bonne conduite de L'Institut

### Chapitre 22.

## Des Malades

On n'aura jamais recours a des parents  
ou on ne permettra jamais qu'aucun des freres  
aids recourus aux freres dans quelques malades  
ou infirmités que ce soit pour des remedes

Frontispiece: facsimile reproduction of a page—chapter 22, “Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute”—from the Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the 1718 manuscript preserved in the Rome archives of the Institute. Photo E. Rousset (*Jean-Baptiste de La Salle; Iconographie*, Boulogne: Limet, 1979, plate 52).

# Rule and Foundational Documents

John Baptist de La Salle

Translated and edited  
by Augustine Loes, FSC,  
and Ronald Isetti

Lasallian Publications  
Christian Brothers Conference  
Landover, Maryland

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Baptist de La Salle

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This book is humbly and gratefully dedicated  
to Edwin Bannon, FSC,  
scholar, gentleman, and brother  
after the mind and heart of John Baptist de La Salle

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Sponsored by Christian Brothers Conference (Regional Conference of Christian Brothers of the United States of America and Toronto), the Lasallian Publications project includes eighteen volumes on the life, writings, and work of John Baptist de La Salle (1651–1719), Founder of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, and on the early history of the Brothers.

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# Contents

Preface . . . . .	xi
<i>Rule of 1705 and Rule of 1718</i> . . . . .	1
Introduction, by Luke Salm, FSC . . . . .	3
[Chapter 1] The Purpose and the Necessity of This Institute . . .	13
[Chapter 2] The Spirit of This Institute . . . . .	16
[Chapter 3] The Spirit of Community in This Institute and the Exercises Performed in Common in It . . . . .	20
[Chapter 4] The Exercises of Piety Practiced in This Institute . .	22
[Chapter 5] The Exercises of Humiliation and Mortification Practiced in This Institute . . . . .	25
[Chapter 6] How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves During Recreation . . . . .	29
Topics on Which the Brothers Ought to Converse During Recreation . . . . .	32
[Chapter 7] How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Their Pupils . . . . .	36
[Chapter 8] How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils . . . . .	41
[Chapter 9] How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Themselves, Brothers, and Outsiders . . . . .	44
[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 . . . . .	50
[Chapter 11] The Inspector of Schools . . . . .	52
[Chapter 12] How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to the Brother Director . . . . .	53
[Chapter 13] How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves Toward One Another . . . . .	58
[Chapter 14] How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders . . . . .	62
[Chapter 15] How the Serving Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves . . . . .	65
[Chapter 16] Regularity . . . . .	68
Rules Concerning Special Virtues	
[Chapter 17] Poverty . . . . .	71
[Chapter 18] [This chapter number first occurs in the Rule of 1725]	



[Chapter 19] Chastity . . . . .	74
[Chapter 20] Obedience . . . . .	76
Chapter on Silence . . . . .	78
[Chapter 21] Modesty . . . . .	81
Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute	
[Chapter 22] Illnesses; the Sick . . . . .	83
[Chapter 23] Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers . . . . .	85
[Chapter 24] Travel . . . . .	90
[Chapter 25] Letters . . . . .	93
[Chapter 26] The Latin Language . . . . .	96
[Chapter 27] Daily Exercises . . . . .	97
[Chapter 28] Special Exercises for Sundays and Feasts . . . . .	104
[Chapter 29] Special Exercises for Holidays . . . . .	109
[Chapter 30] Special Practices on Certain Days of the Year . . . . .	112
[Chapter 31] Daily Regulations for Vacation Time . . . . .	137
[Chapter 32] Rule for the Time of the Common Retreat	
During Vacation . . . . .	139
Renewal of Vows . . . . .	141
Daily Exercises for the House of the Novitiate . . . . .	142
 <i>Memorandum on the Habit</i> . . . . .	147
Introduction, by Ronald Isetti . . . . .	149
Memorandum . . . . .	181
 <i>Rules I Have Imposed on Myself</i> . . . . .	193
Introduction, by Ronald Isetti . . . . .	195
Rules I Have Imposed on Myself . . . . .	199
 <i>Other Personal Documents</i> . . . . .	203
Heroic Vow . . . . .	203
Formula of Vows . . . . .	204
Testament . . . . .	205
 <i>Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute</i> . . . . .	207
 Appendix 1 “For a Better Understanding of Our Rule,”	
by Maurice Hermans, FSC . . . . .	217
Appendix 2 Chapter Numbers and Headings of the Rule	
of 1705, of 1718, and of 1726 . . . . .	257
Bibliography . . . . .	261
Index to <i>Rule of 1705</i> and <i>Rule of 1718</i> . . . . .	265



## Preface

The purpose of this volume is to introduce and present the thought and organization that John Baptist de La Salle, with the help of the original Brothers, brought to the creation of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, also known today as the De La Salle Christian Brothers. This book includes a number of foundational documents authored by Saint John Baptist de La Salle: *Rule of 1705*, *Rule of 1718*, *Memorandum on the Habit*, *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself*, *Heroic Vow*, *Formula of Vows*, *Testament*, and *Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute*.

In 1716, De La Salle invited the Directors of the twenty-two communities in France to come to an assembly to review and revise the *Rule of 1705*, one copy of which, dated 23 September 1705, has been preserved. It is generally accepted that the *Rule of 1705* is based on a manuscript worked out by De Salle and the Brothers in 1694 that has not survived. Sixteen of the Directors were able to begin the meeting on 16 May 1717 at the Brothers' house of Saint Yon in the city of Rouen. They completed their work by 23 May and then asked De La Salle to review what they had done and to write the final *Rule*. It is clear that the Founder made significant changes, which is one of the main reasons for making this present comparison of the two editions. He completed his work by the following year; one manuscript copy, dated 31 October 1718, has been preserved. The two early manuscript editions of the Rule are presented here in opposite columns to provide a comparison between the *Rule of 1705* and the *Rule of 1718*.

This text of the Rule of 1705 and of 1718 is a revision of the traditional English translation from the Institute's 1947 publication, *Common Rules and Constitutions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*. It is also a revision of the Buttimer Institute projects of Eugene O'Gara, FSC, "The Rule of 1705–English Version" and "The Rule of 1718–English version". The revision in each case was made by a careful study of the original French and by an effort to achieve a consistent style and contemporary language throughout the translation.

This present volume also includes De La Salle's *Memorandum on the Habit* and his *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself*, translated and edited by Ronald Isetti, PhD. His introductions and his notes for these two documents outline their historical circumstances and influence.

Three brief personal documents of John Baptist de La Salle—*Heroic Vow*, *Formula of Vows*, and *Testament*—are also reproduced here. The one-volume French edition of De La Salle's complete works, *Œuvres Complètes* (Rome, 1993), includes them among his *écrits personnels*.

The final document, *Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute*, was circulated in manuscript form in 1718 to the Directors of the twenty-two communities at that time. Fortunately, one copy of this fourteen-page manuscript, signed by Brother Barthélemy, has been preserved in the Institute's Rome archives.

Appendix 1 is an edited and abridged translation of an essay, "For a Better Understanding of Our Rule," by Brother Maurice Hermans, about the monastic traditions that De La Salle adapted in the Rule of the Brothers. This lecture was first given in 1948, then revised in the form of an essay in 1954, and, finally, published in *Cahiers lasalliens* 5 (Rome, 1991) as part of this testimonial volume dedicated to Brother Maurice, who had died in 1987. Although much of the essay is dated, it has great value both for a study of the mind of De La Salle and because it is the first work of Brother Maurice, who for the next four decades would be a leader in the study of the origins of the Institute. One of the several volumes of the *Cahiers lasalliens* that he edited was based on his dissertation for the degree of doctor of canon law, in 1962, on the history of the canonical status and of the formal approval of the Institute by the church in 1725.

Credit must also be given to William Mann, FSC, Vicar General of the Institute and former chairman of the Publications Committee of the Christian Brothers Conference, and to Paul Grass, FSC, Executive Director of Lasallian Publications, for the content and format of this volume and for making possible the completion of the USA/Toronto Region's Lasallian Publications project, initiated in 1984. This project has also been given significant support by Kevin Gilhooly, FSC, Regional Director of the Christian Brothers Conference.

Augustine Loes, FSC, translator and editor, *Rule of 1705*, *Rule of 1718*, *Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute*, and appendix 1.

Ronald Isetti, translator and editor, *Memorandum on the Habit* and *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself*.

# Rule of 1705 and Rule of 1718

Translated and edited by Augustine Loes, FSC

Introduction by Luke Salm, FSC



# Introduction

Of all the writings of John Baptist de La Salle, perhaps the most difficult for any reader in the post-Vatican II era is the book of the Rule. While most people are aware that religious institutes have rules and that the members are expected to live by them, not everyone is prepared for the cultural shock that comes from encountering the details of what a religious rule from an earlier era required of those committed to its observance. That is especially true of the rules developed for religious institutes founded in the centuries immediately after the Council of Trent (1534–65), which were expected to contribute to the Catholic reform set in motion by that Council. A certain historical perspective, therefore, can help to provide some hermeneutical tools to mine the riches in a text such as the one presented here by Brother Augustine.

Structured religious life originated in the Church out of a charismatic movement, or many such movements, the best known being that of the Fathers of the Desert in the fourth century. These were committed Christians who fled from an increasingly established Christianity to live the radical Gospel in a life of solitude and penance in the Egyptian desert. As the numbers and sometimes the idiosyncratic practices of these hermits began to multiply, Saint Pachomius brought groups of them to live together, a situation that occasioned the first religious Rule. It was designed to give an element of direction and discipline to those who wanted to live the Christian life apart from the world while yet preserving the charismatic dimension of this developing movement. In sociological terms, there inevitably arose a tension between charism and institutionalization that has characterized the development of religious rules ever since.

In the West, Saint Augustine (†430) wrote a Rule for the priests and the clerics studying for the priesthood who formed a community around him as their bishop. A century later, Saint Benedict developed a Rule for his monks living in autonomous monasteries. This Rule,

while stressing obedience, poverty, regular observance, and introducing for the first time the concept of stability, is known for its gentleness and good sense, in terms of what can be expected of mortal human beings. The Rule of Saint Benedict was dominant in the West until the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century shifted the emphasis from the isolated autonomous monastery to the interconnected urban houses joined together to form an Order.

In the sixteenth century, as part of the Catholic Reformation, there came the orders of clerics regular, especially the Jesuits, who abandoned the monastic choir for more flexibility in the mission. There followed in the post-Tridentine period the introduction of simple vows, non-clerical institutes of men, and non-cloistered congregations of women to adapt to new pastoral needs. In each stage of these developments, the respective groups established rules that combined organizational structures with the charismatic challenge of the Gospel and the characteristic vision of the charismatic founder or foundress.

When, in 1679, John Baptist de La Salle first became interested in helping the little band of Adrien Nyel's schoolteachers in Reims, he did not know at first, as he himself later admitted, what he was getting into. For that matter, neither did the first schoolteachers who were supported by De La Salle's largesse. As De La Salle took over more and more responsibility for the group, however, he recognized that they lacked three important qualities that would be needed if their work was to be effective: discipline, professional training, and above all, a spiritual vision. Within two years or so, the first teachers recruited by Nyel found the vision and the demands of De La Salle more than they had bargained for, and they went off. As the early biographers tell us, within a short time, certainly by 1682, new and more qualified candidates appeared, with better talent for teaching, more solid piety, and a disposition to live in community.

It is unlikely that De La Salle thought of himself as the founder of a new religious congregation in the traditional and canonical sense. Just as the foundation itself was a process more than an event, so the elaboration of a rule of life was derived more from ongoing experience than from a text. From the beginning, the model that De La Salle proposed to the teachers was the community of the first Christians, described in the Acts of the Apostles as having all things in common and devoting themselves to the Apostles' teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, the Gospel was seen from the beginning as the first and principal Rule of the Brothers.

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1. Acts 2:42–47.



Their community was religious, not because it had a Rule but because of its religious practices, apostolic activity, commitment to a vocation, religious motivation, and vision. By 1684 De La Salle had transformed his group of teachers into a tightly knit and spiritually motivated community of celibate young men who now called themselves “Brothers,” associated together to keep gratuitous schools in order to bring the good news of salvation to the children of the artisans and the poor.

The first attempt to codify the manner of living in an apostolic community took the form of a *coutumier*, a daily schedule, adopted perhaps as early as 1682 and undoubtedly ratified by the first assembly of the Brothers in 1686. The manuscript copy of *Pratique du règlement journalier* from 1713 is considered to reflect, if not to duplicate, that first attempt to establish a structural framework for the emerging community. We know from the early biographers that De La Salle relied on the experience, insights, and cooperation of his Brothers in elaborating the text. The twenty-page document is quite specific about the daily schedule, from rising until retiring; the time and duration of the religious exercises, including vocal and interior prayer, Mass, devotional prayers, and penitential practices for morning and evening; meals, including books to be read at dinner and supper; recreation; study of catechism and preparation of classes; special schedules for Sundays, holidays, and important feasts of the liturgical year. Thus, within five years or so, De La Salle and his early Brothers had a written program to assure stability in their community and religious life, together with an as-yet-unformulated spiritual and apostolic vision to give charismatic motivation and vitality to the institutionalized structure.

The years that intervened between the assembly in 1686 and the first General Chapter, in 1694, were years of development, modest success and expansion, near collapse, and remarkable recovery. Within that time, the center moved from Reims to Paris; a conflict with the pastor of Saint Sulpice led De La Salle to write his *Memorandum on the Habit*, giving written expression to the Society’s self-identity. But then, the candidate chosen by the Founder to study for the priesthood and so be eligible to succeed him died; the Founder came close to death himself; the Brothers were overworked, and morale was low.

Meeting the crisis, the Founder, in 1691, with two of the Brothers made the “heroic vow” to establish the Institute, even if it meant they had to beg in order to survive; a novitiate was opened, and a program of continuing formation was set in place for the veterans, including return visits to the novitiate and regular letters to the Superior for his guidance and spiritual direction.

By 1694, therefore, the Founder thought it was time to consult with the Brothers, individually and together, to formulate and adopt a Rule for themselves on the basis of their lived experience and their emerging sense of identity. The manuscript copy of the Rule dating from 1705, the earliest that has survived, is thought to be a fairly accurate rendering of the Rule adopted ten years earlier. This Rule is a Rule of Life in the true sense of the term. Integrated with the daily regulations, we now find statements of identity, purpose, and spirit. The teaching ministry in the schools is incorporated as well, and in considerable detail, as is the life of the local community in relation to policies observed throughout the Institute.

This Rule presents the life of the Brother as a seamless reality into which are woven his daily routine at prayer, in community, and in the school; his sense of vocation and the spirit that gives it life; his lifestyle, characterized by poverty, chastity, obedience, and silence; his relationships with his Brothers, the superiors, and outsiders. Notable for its originality and its rootedness in the living experience of the Brothers, this Rule admirably provides charismatic vision to animate the institutional structures, and these in turn are designed to guarantee the survival and the transmission of the charism itself.

The period between the General Chapters of 1694 and 1717 was marked, on the one hand, by the opposition on the part of ecclesiastical and educational authorities to the Founder's educational methods and the form of his religious community and, on the other hand, by unprecedented success and expansion of the new Society in a network of schools and communities that extended all over France, from the English Channel to the Mediterranean Sea. After recovering toward the end of his life from a personal crisis and a period of withdrawal, De La Salle heeded the command of his Brothers to resume the governance of the Society and to guide the process of choosing his successor.

Once the General Chapter of 1717 had elected Brother Barthélemy (Joseph Truffet) to succeed De La Salle, the delegates turned their attention to the revision of the Rule. If we are to believe the biographer Canon Blain, the discussions centered for the most part on recreation, including consultation with neighboring groups of religious men, and on the Rule of the Brother Director, which the Founder had recently circulated. In any case, De La Salle was given the results of the discussions and asked to revise the Rule as he would see fit. This he did in a relatively short time. The text that has come down to us, entitled *Règles Communes des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes*, is a copy sent by Brother Barthélemy to the community at Troyes in 1718. The

Founder's Rule of the Brother Director was not incorporated into the Rule of 1718, but after the Founder's death, it served as the basis for an independent Book of Government that had its own separate history until it was finally brought into the Rule itself by the General Chapter of 1986.

The parallel presentation in this present volume makes it easy for the reader to see the additions and modifications that were made in 1718 to the Rule of 1694, found in the 1705 manuscript. Most obvious are the chapters added on modesty, derived from Saint Ignatius; on regularity, that is, observance; additional chapters on school and one on the serving Brothers. More significant are two shorter paragraphs, one in chapter two, "The Spirit of This Institute" (the spirit of faith), the other in chapter sixteen, "Regularity," on charity as the motive for regular observance. It was Brother Maurice Hermans, in his essay published in 1954, who first highlighted the significance of these additions as keys to interpret the rest of the text of the primitive Rule. It is as if De La Salle, with only a year to live, looking back on the years of insistence on literal observance and strict conformity to rules, realized that there was a danger that rules as such might become an end in themselves. The paragraph on the "utmost importance" of the spirit of faith restores the primacy of spirit over the letter; the paragraph on the love of God and the love of neighbor, "without which all observance is useless for salvation," restores the primacy of the love commandment over all other commandments and rules. Brother Maurice's carefully researched essay emphasizes the originality of the Founder's use of these themes traditional in the history of monastic rules. The substance of the essay is presented in the appendix of this present work, and the relevant paragraphs from the Rule of 1718 form part of the introduction to the Rule of 1987, presently in force.

The Rule of 1718 is an essential part of the legacy of John Baptist de La Salle to the Institute he founded. It is a legacy, to use a Gospel image, not intended to be wrapped in a cloth and buried in the ground but to be put out at interest to yield fruitful returns for successive generations of Brothers. In the period immediately following the Founder's death, the superiors of a Society without civil or ecclesiastical status took steps to obtain both royal "letters patent," giving corporate status in civil law, and papal approval, in the form of the Bull of Approbation establishing the Institute in the Church with canonical status as a Lay Institute of Pontifical Right with Simple Vows. As part of the process of applying for the Bull, the Institute submitted eighteen articles drawn from the Rule of 1718, some textual but most as paraphrases, and these were incorporated into the Bull.

The papal approval—and canonical control—of the Rule, therefore, extended only to those articles. In essence the Bull constituted approval of the Institute, not of its Rule.

Although the Bull was a boon to the young Institute, the subsequent revision of the Rule and its first published edition in 1726, under the title *Règles et Constitutions de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes*, introduced elements that are now seen as foreign to the spirit of De La Salle. In this 1726 text, the originality of his creation was eroded to some extent by absorbing much of the specific Lasallian practice and language into the pre-existing categories applicable to religious congregations in general. New chapters, heavily juridical in tone, had to be added on the recently introduced “vows of religion,” in the process minimizing and changing the mission orientation of the three specific vows made in the Founder’s lifetime. A lengthy preface was added to the Rule, not at all Lasallian in its legalism and casuistry, its distinction between commandment and counsel, its preoccupation with obligation and sin, citing the hazards to salvation in the pursuit of perfection. These themes would serve for generations to come as standards for presenting and interpreting the Rule.

Over the years, as circumstances required, successive General Chapters brought modifications to the Rule, often cautious and restricted out of respect for the primitive texts, yet deemed necessary in the light of difficulties with implementation and observance. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the General Chapters recognized the need for a revised Rule. Commissions were set up to resolve the hesitancy between respect for the original Rule and the need to update. The closest they came to a total revision was a text prepared for the Chapter of 1884 and sponsored by Brother Irlide, Superior General. He died before the Chapter could meet, and the text was set aside.

At the General Chapter of 1901, in an attempt to show fidelity to the Founder, recently canonized, the Institute decided to return to the text of 1718, but not totally, because the chapters on the vows had to be included as well as other significant changes. Asterisks were attached to certain articles to refer to capitular decisions responsible for them. In 1923, other changes had to be made to conform to the 1917 Code of Canon Law and to incorporate the papal decree allowing the teaching of the classics. But that General Chapter repudiated “any modification touching the very essence of the Rule, as asked for by notes to the Chapter, unless they were required by Canon Law.”

The first half of the twentieth century represented a high point in what could be called the dominance of institutionalized juridicism

over charism in religious life and especially in the Institute of the Brothers. There was much preoccupation with Canon Law and moral casuistry. The hierarchical structure of the Institute served as an instrument of social control to enforce worldwide uniformity. Little initiative was left to regional or local superiors, much less to the Brothers individually or in groups. At the same time, new apostolic opportunities, developments in the field of education, growing respect for cultural and racial diversity, and fast-moving changes in contemporary life generally made literal observance of many of the old institutional forms difficult and in many places impossible. This became painfully evident in the adaptations required by the global upheaval of World War II and the opening of the atomic age. As so many of the specific rules became anachronistic, there was danger that the Rule itself and the inspirational charism behind it might also be lost.

Even so, the response of the post-war General Chapter of 1946 was to turn to the past, return again to the Rule of 1718, and produce yet another outmoded text that would this time be “frozen in concrete,” thanks to the initiative of the Superior General, who sent the text to the Vatican for approval. For the first time, then, control over the Rule was out of the hands of the Brothers and the Institute and handed over in its totality to higher authority. The carefully researched and highly motivational lectures of Brother Maurice Hermans in the renewal program known as the Rome Second Novitiate represent a last-ditch attempt to win respect and conviction for the Rule of 1947. By 1956, the General Chapter in that year already saw the need for a total revision of the Rule and established a commission to prepare a new text.

With the election of Pope John XXIII and the unexpected and unprecedented changes wrought by the Second Vatican Council, the time was ripe for a totally new approach to the Rule. The renewal of religious life mandated by the Council called for a return not to the letter of the Founder’s legacy but to his charism and spirit. This return, together with the Gospel and the signs of the times, was to serve as the basis for an adaptation and renewal that was to begin with a revision of the Rule.

Carried forward by the thrust of the Council, the General Chapter of 1966–67 produced a new text of the Rule, almost entirely inspirational in character. The Rule was complemented by a set of “constitutions,” specific norms that were expected to be observed and observable throughout the worldwide Institute. More detailed guidelines were left to local bodies under the newly adopted principle of subsidiarity in government. The Book of Government, which always

had a life independent of the Rule, was also revised (and revised again in 1976) to create structures to balance the need for both central authority and local determination. Following church directives, these texts were to serve as normative on a temporary basis and to be submitted for definitive approval after two successive General Chapters, that is, by the time of the Chapter of 1986.

In 1983 a new Code of Canon Law was promulgated. The revised section on religious institutes introduced a new approach to the revision of the Rule. Like the new Code itself, religious rules were now required to contain both spiritual and juridical elements; it would no longer be possible to have a “Rule” with only spiritual elements and a separate set of “constitutions” or a “book of government” containing juridical elements. In the new terminology, there was to be a set of “constitutions” containing essential elements, both spiritual and juridical, subject to Vatican approval and control. It was permitted also to have a set of “other codes” (the 1986 Chapter opted for the term “statutes”) to constitute the particular law internal to each institute.

In 1984, an international commission was established by the Brother Superior General to prepare a draft text of a revised Rule that would incorporate the vision of the Chapter of 1966 and yet meet the new canonical requirements. This meant, in effect, that three capitular texts, the Rule, the Constitutions, and the Book of Government, had to be reduced to one “book of rules” with two types of articles, the constitutions and the statutes. The mostly charismatic text of 1966 could no longer stand alone as the Rule of the Institute. Study also showed that the revised rules adopted after Vatican II by congregations of men all tended to have the same thrust, the same framework, the same theological language, with very little to differentiate one institute from another.

In addition to the requirements of Canon Law, the commission set to work to prepare a revised Rule that would reflect a) the Founder’s experience in the origins of the Institute as well as the charism and some of the language of his primitive Rule, b) the Gospel-inspired thrust of the 1967 Rule, c) the structures of subsidiarity and co-responsibility elaborated in the 1976 Book of Government, and d) the experience of the Brothers as expressed in the notes sent to the Chapter. The vision of the Rule as a total entity, a “Rule of Life” rather than a collection of regulations, is signified in the title, which traditionally had been in the plural, “Common Rules” or “Rules and Constitutions.” Already in 1967 the English edition had opted for “The Rule” as a title. The commission’s proposed version adopted this usage for the official French text, the basis for translation into the other languages.

In preparation for the 1986 General Chapter, the text of the commission was reviewed by the Superior General and his Council and circulated to the entire Institute in their name. The Chapter itself studied, amended, and voted the text, comprising both constitutions and statutes but presented as a single Rule to guide the life of the Institute. The Rule was then sent to the Vatican for approval. With some slight modifications the text was approved on 26 January 1987, and so it became the Rule of the Institute.

At first glance, the current Rule of 1987 would seem to be radically different than the texts we have from 1705 and 1718, presented in this volume. There can be no doubt that the contrast shows an element of discontinuity that is inherent in the historical process. Yet a closer examination will show that the essentials have been preserved and, indeed, highlighted for greater effect. The paragraphs from the Rule of 1718 on the spirit of faith and on the love commandment are cited verbatim as an introduction to the 1987 text. The citation of the passage from Luke's Gospel on authority as service provides not only an introduction to the chapters on government but also a reminder of the conviction of the Founder (and of Vatican Council II) that the Gospel is the first and principal Rule. Chapter one reprises all of the primitive texts on the nature and the purpose of the Institute, the spirit of faith and zeal, the ideal of community and brotherhood, the integration of the constitutive elements in the Brother's vocation: apostolic mission, religious consecration, and community life. Each of the ten chapters begins with a reference to the Founder's experience (chapters one, two, four, six, and ten), his writings (consecration to the Trinity, in chapter three; his meditations, in chapter five), and his concern for unity among the Brothers (chapters seven, eight, and nine).

With these texts as witness to the relationship between the new and the old, the Founder's time and the new millennium, the charism that brought the Institute into being and the institutionalized structures that have enabled it to survive, it is hoped that this present volume, so ably and carefully prepared by Brother Augustine Loes, will motivate the Brothers to find in the Founder's Rule a new means to appreciate the Rule now in force and to discover in the comparative study a new incentive to make the Rule a vital force in the life of each Brother and of the Institute.

Luke Salm, FSC





## Rule of 1705

## Rule of 1718

### [Chapter 1]<sup>1</sup>

#### The Purpose and the Necessity of This Institute<sup>2</sup>

[1] The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Society<sup>3</sup> in which profession is made to conduct schools gratuitously.

The members of this Institute will call themselves Brother, and they will never allow themselves to be called otherwise.

### Chapter 1

#### The Purpose and the Necessity of This Institute<sup>2</sup>

[1] The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a Society<sup>3</sup> in which profession is made to conduct schools gratuitously.

The members of this Institute will call themselves Brother, and they will never allow themselves to be called otherwise. When they name any of their Brothers, they will always say, our dear Brother N.

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1. Bracketed chapter and article numbers are not in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718. The 1705 ms. has neither chapter nor article numbers; the 1718 ms. has only chapter numbers. Bracketed numeration is from the Rule of 1787, which the successive editions generally follow; see Cahiers lasalliens 25.

2. This chapter is probably the first written expression of De La Salle's vision for the Brothers. The Rule of 1705 is the earliest extant copy, but these articles were probably in manuscript form as early as 1694, when De La Salle and the Brothers began formulating the rules that had been guiding their lives since the beginning in the rue Neuve in 1682. Significantly, this chapter not only remained substantially unchanged in the Rule of 1718 but also still expresses accurately the purpose and the necessity of the Institute today.

3. The word *Society* is used by De La Salle interchangeably with the word *Institute*. He uses the word *Community* to mean the Institute as a whole, but in the chapter on community spirit and elsewhere, although seldom, he does use it to refer to the local community. When he means the Community as the Institute, the *C* is in upper case; when he is referring to the local community, it is in lower case. The references to the local community regularly use *maison*, translated as *house*. (A count of how often these words occur in De La Salle's writings is in Cahiers lasalliens 11, 51, n. 4.)

## 1705

[2] They cannot be priests or aspire to the ecclesiastical state, or even sing, wear a surplice, or exercise any function in church.

[3] The purpose of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children, and it is for this purpose the Brothers conduct schools, that having the children under their guidance from morning until evening, these teachers may be able to teach them to live a good life by instructing them in the mysteries of our religion and inspiring them with Christian maxims, and so give them a suitable education.

[4] The necessity of this Institute is very great because the working class and the poor, being usually little instructed and occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their children, cannot give them the instruction they need and a respectable and Christian education. Persons are therefore needed to take the place of fathers and mothers to instruct children in the mysteries of religion that they ought to know and in the elementary practices of the Christian life.

[5] It was to procure this advantage for the children of the working class and of the poor that the Christian Schools were established.

## 1718

[2] 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.

[3] The purpose of this Institute is to give a Christian education to children, and 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 by instructing them in the mysteries of our holy religion and inspiring them with Christian maxims, and so give them a suitable education.

[4] The necessity of this Institute is very great because the working class and the poor, being usually little instructed and occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their children, cannot give them the instruction they need and a respectable and Christian education.

[5] It was to procure this advantage for the children of the working class and of the poor that the Christian Schools were established.

1705

[6] All disorders, especially among the working class and the poor, usually arise from their having been in childhood left to themselves and very badly brought up. It is almost impossible to repair this at a more advanced age, because the bad habits they have acquired are overcome only with great difficulty, and scarcely ever entirely, no matter what care may be taken to destroy them, whether by frequent instructions or by the use of the sacraments.

As the principal benefit that ought to be expected from the establishment of the Christian Schools is to forestall these disorders and prevent their evil consequences, it is easy to conceive the importance of such schools and their necessity.

1718

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As the principal benefit that ought to be expected from the establishment of the Christian Schools is to forestall these disorders and prevent their evil consequences, it is easy to conceive the importance of such schools and their necessity.

1705

[Chapter 2]

The Spirit of This Institute

[2] The spirit of this Institute is, first, a spirit of faith, which ought to induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and

1718

Chapter 2

The Spirit of This Institute

[1]<sup>4</sup> That which is of the utmost importance and to which the greatest attention ought to be given in a Community is that all who compose it possess the spirit peculiar to it, that the novices apply themselves to acquire it, and that those who are already members make it their first care to preserve and increase it in themselves. For it is this spirit that ought to animate all their actions and be the motive of their whole conduct. Those who do not possess it and those who have lost it ought to be looked upon as dead members, and they ought to look upon themselves as such, because they are deprived of the life and grace of their state, and they ought to be convinced that it will be very difficult for them to preserve the grace of God.

[2] The spirit of this Institute is, first, a spirit of faith, which ought to induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and

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4. The addition of this article to the Rule of 1718 suggests that De La Salle, at the end of his life, was profoundly aware of the primacy of the spirit over everything else in the life of the Brothers and wanted the Brothers to share in this awareness. He wrote a similar introductory article to chapter 16, which deals with regularity, the observance of the details of the Rule.

1705

to attribute everything to God, always entering into these sentiments of Job: “The Lord gave me everything, and the Lord has taken everything away from me; nothing has happened to me except what pleases him,” and into other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.

[3] To live in this spirit, the Brothers of this Society will have a most profound respect for Holy Scripture; in proof of this, they will always carry with them the New Testament and pass no day without reading some of it through a sentiment of faith, respect, and veneration for the divine words contained in it.

[4] Second, the Brothers of this Society will animate all their actions with sentiments of faith, and in performing them, they will have in view the orders and the will of God, which they will adore in all things and by which they will be careful to guide and govern themselves.

[5] For this purpose they will apply themselves to have great control over their senses and to use them only as needed, not wishing to use them except according to the order and the will of God.

1718

to attribute everything to God, always entering into these sentiments of Job: “The Lord gave me everything, and the Lord has taken everything away from me; nothing has happened to me except what pleases him,” and into other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.

[3] To enter into this spirit and to live up to it, first, the Brothers of this Society will have a most profound respect for Holy Scripture; in proof of this, they will always carry with them the New Testament and pass no day without reading some of it through a sentiment of faith, respect, and veneration for the divine words contained in it, looking upon it as their first and principal rule.

[4] Second, the Brothers of this Society will animate all their actions with sentiments of faith, and in performing them, they will always have in view the orders and the will of God, which they will adore in all things and by which they will be careful to guide and govern themselves.

[5] For this purpose they will apply themselves to have great control over their senses and to use them only as needed, not wishing to use them except according to the order and the will of God.

## 1705

[6] They will make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom, or from any human motive, but they will act so as to perform them all by the guidance of God, through the movement of his Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing him.

[7] They will pay as much attention as they can to the holy presence of God and take care to renew this from time to time, being well convinced that they ought to think only of him and of what he ordains, that is, of what concerns their duty and employment.

[8] They will banish from their minds all vain ideas and thoughts that could withdraw them from these practices, which are very important for them and without which they can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of their Institute.

[9] The spirit of this Institute consists, secondly, 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 and inspiring them with a great aversion and a very great horror for sin and for all

## 1718

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1705

that could cause them to lose purity.

[10] To enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society will strive by prayer, instruction, and their vigilance and good conduct in school to procure the salvation of the children confided to them, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.

1718

that could cause them to lose purity.

[10] To enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society will strive by prayer, instruction, and their vigilance and good conduct in school to procure the salvation of the children confided to them, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.

The Rule will be read entirely and consecutively, a chapter at a time, on Sundays and feasts during dinner,<sup>5</sup> except on feasts of the mysteries, when it will be read in the evening.

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5. In the time of De La Salle, the midday meal, “dinner,” was the principal meal of the day.

1705

## [Chapter 3]

**The Spirit of Community in This Institute and the Exercises Performed in Common in It**

[1] A true spirit of community will always be shown and maintained in this Institute. All the exercises will be performed in common from morning to evening.

They will never warm themselves unless together, and they will not make any exercise by the stove, not even recreation.

All will sleep in the same dormitory or in common dormitories if there is need for several; in that case the Brother Director will take care to appoint in each a Brother to see and make sure that very exact and very profound silence is observed and that everything is done with modesty and in a becoming manner.

[2] All will eat together in the refectory. It will never be permitted to eat outside of the house,<sup>7</sup> and none of the Brothers will eat in private or outside the common meals, except by reason of infirmity or evident necessity and with permission.

1718

## Chapter 3

**The Spirit of Community in This Institute and the Exercises Performed in Common in It**

[1] A true spirit of community will always be shown and maintained in this Institute. All the exercises will be performed in common from morning to evening. They will also warm themselves together by the stove in the common room.<sup>6</sup>

All will sleep in the same dormitory or in common dormitories if there is need for several; in that case the Brother Director will take care to appoint in each a Brother to see and make sure that very exact and very profound silence is observed and that everything is done with modesty and in a becoming manner.

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6. "Common room" is the traditional expression for the room where the Brothers gathered for spiritual exercises and school preparation.

7. See note 3, page 13.



1705

[3] All will take recreation together; likewise, all will walk out together on holidays, without separating or forming several groups.

None of the Brothers will have a private room, not even the Superior of the Institute, who only will have an office for writing and for doing what concerns his responsibility and work.

[4] No outsider will be admitted to any exercise, not even into the refectory while the Brothers are there taking their meal.

[5] The Brothers will never go out alone, except the serving Brother, who has charge of the household expenses and of providing for the temporal needs of the house.

1718

[3] All will take recreation together; likewise, all will walk out together on holidays, without separating or forming several groups.

None of the Brothers will have a private room; only the Superior of the Institute will have an office for writing.

[4] No outsider will be admitted to any exercise, not even into the refectory while the Brothers are there taking their meal.

[5] The Brothers will never go out alone, except the serving Brother, who has charge of the household expenses and of providing for the temporal needs of the house.

1705

**[Chapter 4]****The Exercises of Piety  
Practiced in This Institute**

[1] The Brothers of this Institute ought to have a great love for the holy exercise of interior prayer, and they ought to look on it as the first and principal of their daily exercises and the one that is the most capable of drawing down the blessing of God on all the others. They will be exact to make it daily at the time indicated and for the full time prescribed by the Rule, and they will not absent themselves from this exercise without an urgent necessity that cannot be delayed. If they sometimes are obliged to absent themselves, they will ask the Brother Director for another time to make it during the day, without failing to do so.

[4]<sup>8</sup> They will also have a very special love for Holy Communion. They will never abstain from it on ordinary days without necessity and without the advice of the Brother Director or the order of their confessor.

The Brother Director may deprive them of it for what appears to be a considerable exterior fault.

1718

**Chapter 4****The Exercises of Piety  
Practiced in This Institute**

[1] The Brothers of this Institute ought to have a great love for the holy exercise of interior prayer, and they ought to look on it as the first and principal of their daily exercises and the one that is the most capable of drawing down the blessing of God on all the others. They will be exact to make it daily at the time indicated and for the full time prescribed by the Rule, and they will not absent themselves from this exercise without an urgent necessity that cannot be delayed. If they sometimes are obliged to absent themselves, they will ask the Brother Director for another time to make it during the day, without failing to do so.

[4] They will also have a very special love for Holy Communion. They will never abstain from it on ordinary days without necessity and without the advice of the Brother Director or the order of their confessor.

The Brother Director may deprive them of it for what appears to be a considerable exterior fault.

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8. There are no articles numbered 2 and 3 in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718; two new articles were inserted in the Rule of 1726, stating that the Brothers may have recourse to the exercises of the novitiate for the benefit of their spiritual life.

1705

[5] The ordinary Communion of the community will take place twice a week, on Sunday and Thursday or on the feast that may occur during the week.

The novices and serving Brothers will not receive Communion on Thursday, and when there are two feasts during the week that are not solemn, they will receive on only one of them.

Each day of the week, one or more Brothers will receive Communion, and they will make half an hour of interior prayer at eight o'clock in the evening, so that everyone, one after the other, will do this each week.

[8] Immediately after Communion, the Brothers, including those who have not been assigned to receive, will make a half hour of thanksgiving.

1718

[5] The ordinary Communion of the community will take place twice a week, on Sunday and Thursday, when there is a holiday all day, or on the feast that may occur during the week. The Brother Director may allow those who ask to receive Communion more often if he judges it proper.

[6] They will offer for the community the Communion of Thursday or of the feast that occurs during the week.

[7] They will receive Communion on the feast of the Holy Guardian Angels, 2 October.

[8] Thanksgiving after Holy Communion will always be for half an hour.

## 1705

[9] The Brothers will ordinarily go to Confession every week, at a time that will not encroach on the time of school or the exercise of interior prayer.

[11]<sup>9</sup> None of the Brothers will fail to say the rosary every day; if any one has not been able to say it with the community, he will say it at another time appointed for him by the Brother Director.

[12] No Brother will ever be permitted to have any private practices of piety. They will not belong to any confraternity or sodality, however pious it may be; if they belonged to any before entering the Society, they will not, after entering, retain any practices of it, either interior or exterior, but they will conform all their devotions to those that are common and ordinary in the Institute.

[13] All will kneel to adore God in all rooms of the house on entering and leaving, except in the yard, the garden, and the parlor, where they will only raise the calotte and bow to the crucifix.

## 1718

[9] The Brothers will ordinarily go to Confession every week, at a time that will not, as far as possible, encroach on the time of school or the exercise of interior prayer.

[11] None of the Brothers will fail to say the rosary every day; if any one has not been able to say it with the community, he will say it at another time appointed for him by the Brother Director.

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[13] All will kneel to adore God present in all rooms of the house on entering and leaving, except in the yard, the garden, and the parlor, where they will only raise the calotte and bow to the crucifix.

[14] When the Brothers make some mistake in the oratory at the rosary or the Office, they will kiss the floor and rise immediately.

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9. There is no article numbered 10 in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718; a new article 10 was inserted in the Rule of 1726, urging the Brothers' confessors to promote great exactitude regarding the Rule of the Institute.

1705

[Chapter 5]

**The Exercises of Humiliation  
and Mortification Practiced in  
This Institute**

[1] There will be no corporal mortification of Rule in this Institute.

They will, however, retain the practice that has always been observed of abstinence from meat on the Saturdays from Christmas to the feast of the Purification.

[2] They will also observe this practice, from which no one will excuse himself except for sickness and with the permission of the Brother Director: all the Brothers will fast on the day of the week that they will be assigned individually to receive Communion; their fast will consist not of abstaining but of taking only one meal.

1718

**Chapter 5**

**The Exercises of Humiliation  
and Mortification Practiced in  
This Institute**

[1] There will be no corporal mortification of Rule in this Institute.

They will, however, abstain from meat on the Saturdays from Christmas to the feast of the Purification, as well as on the Monday and Tuesday before Lent, except when traveling.

[2] The Brothers will all fast together one day in the week, which will be Friday. On that day six ounces of bread will be given to each Brother at supper, with dessert, as on fast days of the Church.

[3] When a fast day of the Church occurs during the week, the Brothers will not be obliged to observe the fast of the community. On fast days of the Church, only four ounces of bread will be given at supper, with a small amount of dessert.<sup>10</sup>

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10. There are no articles numbered 4, 5, and 6 in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718; three new articles were inserted in the Rule of 1726, giving additional details about the days when fasting is required.

## 1705

[7] The Brothers will accuse themselves of their faults at least once a day, before meals, and the penances imposed upon them for ordinary faults will be some reflections, prayer, or humiliation to be performed at that same time or at another time that the Brother Director will prescribe for them.

[8] The Brother Director may, nevertheless, impose more severe penances according to the need of the Brothers and the gravity of their faults.

[9] The Brothers will charitably advertise one another of their defects, in the presence of the Brother Director, one day every week, which will be on Friday at the end of the evening recreation, which for this purpose will end at a quarter to eight o'clock.

[10] In this exercise the Brothers will advertise only of the exterior faults they have noticed, without mentioning anything purely interior or that could relate to the intention.

## 1718

[7] The Brothers will accuse themselves once a day in the oratory or common room, before supper, of the faults they have committed during the day, and the penances imposed upon them for ordinary faults will be some reflections, prayers, or humiliations to be performed at that same time or at another time that the Brother Director will prescribe for them, as indicated in the *Collection of Penances*.

[8] The Brother Director may, nevertheless, impose more severe penances according to the need of the Brothers and the gravity of their faults.

[9] The Brothers will charitably advertise one another of their defects, in the presence of the Brother Director, one day every week, which will be on Friday at the end of the evening recreation, which for this purpose will end at a quarter to eight o'clock.

[10] In this exercise the Brothers will advertise only of the exterior faults they have noticed, without mentioning anything purely interior or that could relate to the interior.

[11] The Brother Director will not be advertised publicly of his defects unless the Brother Superior of the Institute or the Brother

1705

[12] In this exercise the Brother Director will not permit a Brother to advertise another, either directly or indirectly, of a fault committed against himself or of what relates to eating or other bodily needs.

If someone advertises of a defect of this nature or if it appears that someone advertises of some defect in an uncharitable manner, the Brother Director will impose silence on him for the remainder of the exercise and take care to give him a suitable penance when he accuses himself of this fault.

[13] If it happens that one or more Brothers know of a considerable fault capable of causing scandal, they will not speak of it in this exercise, but they will inform the Brother Director of it privately, and they will not fail to do so under any pretext whatever. Every Brother will look upon this practice as an indispensable duty.

[14] All the Brothers will have a day assigned in each week to give an account of their conscience and their conduct to the Brother Director, and they will do this according to the *Directory* that will be given to them for this purpose.

1718

Visitor is present at the time of his visit.

[12] In this exercise the Brother Director will not permit a Brother to advertise another, either directly or indirectly, of a fault committed against himself or of what relates to eating or other bodily needs.

If someone advertises of a defect of this nature or if it appears that someone advertises of some defect in an uncharitable manner, the Brother Director will impose silence on him for the remainder of the exercise and give him a considerable penance when he accuses himself of this fault.

[13] If it happens that one or more Brothers know of a considerable fault capable of causing scandal, they will not speak of it in this exercise, but they will inform the Brother Director of it privately, and they will not fail to do so under any pretext whatever. Every Brother will look upon this practice as an indispensable duty.

[14] All the Brothers will have a day in each week to give an account of their conduct to the Brother Director, and each Brother will go to the Brother Director on the day and at the hour assigned to give this account of his conduct. He will do so standing or seated, with his calotte off,

## 1705

[15] On the eve of the day assigned to give an account of his conscience, each of the Brothers will use the time of spiritual reading to read the *Directory* and the time of the evening interior prayer in recollection to enter into himself, to reflect on his conduct, to examine himself on what he ought to give an account, and to consider the means he could take to correct himself of his defects.

[15a] Every year on Holy Thursday, the Brothers will beg pardon of one another for the trouble they have given and for all the faults they have committed against one other during the year. The Brother Director will begin first, and he will beg pardon of each of the Brothers individually, kiss his feet, and then embrace him. All the Brothers will then do the same.

## 1718

and according to the *Directory* that will be given to him for this purpose.

[15] On the eve of the day assigned to give an account of his conduct, each of the Brothers will read, at the beginning of spiritual reading, the part of the *Directory* on which he ought to give an account, and he will spend part of the evening interior prayer to dispose himself to give it.

[15a] Every year on Holy Thursday, the Brothers will beg pardon of one another for the trouble they have given and for all the faults they have committed against one other during the year. The Brother Director will begin first, and he will beg pardon of each of the Brothers individually, kiss his feet, and then embrace him. All the Brothers will then do the same, with much modesty.



1705

[Chapter 6]

**How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves During Recreation**

[1] The Brothers will take recreation together, except in the house of the novitiate, where the novices and the serving Brothers may be separated from the others.

[2] No outsider will be admitted to the recreation.

[3] They will not speak at recreation until all have reached the place and the position where it will be taken.

[4] No Brother will speak at recreation until he has first greeted the Brother Director and the Brother Director has greeted him and given permission.

[5] The Brothers will not speak at recreation about what has happened in any of the houses of the Institute, about the affairs of the house in which they are, or about the administration of the Institute.

[6] They will not speak about any of the Brothers, those who have been in the Society, or any other living person.

[7] They will not speak about themselves, their relatives, their

1718

**Chapter 6**

**How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves During Recreation**

[1] The Brothers will take recreation together, except in the house of the novitiate, where the novices may be separated from the others.

[2] No outsider will be admitted to the recreation.

[3] They will not speak at recreation until all have reached the place and the position where it will be taken.

[4] No Brother will speak at recreation until he has first greeted the Brother Director and the Brother Director has greeted him and given permission.

[5] The Brothers will not speak at recreation about what has happened in any of the houses of the Institute, about the affairs of the house in which they are, or about the administration of the Institute.

[6] They will not speak about any of the Brothers, those who have been in the Society, or any other living person.

[7] They will not speak about themselves, their relatives, their

## 1705

native place, what they have done, or even what they have seen or heard, as having seen or heard it, about drinking, eating, or other bodily wants, or about anything related to these topics.

[8] They will never speak about the lack of regularity of any religious Orders or any other Communities.

[9] Nor will they speak about what has occurred in the world, the schools, or what they have learned there, but they will converse on edifying topics that can lead them to love God and practice virtue.

[10]. None of the Brothers will inquire about anything or express his thoughts and feelings on any topic that is proposed, unless the Brother Director asks him.

[11] None of the Brothers will ever mimic or make fun of anyone.

[12] None of the Brothers will ever contradict or disapprove of what the others have said. The Brother Director alone may and ought to do this if it happens that anyone says something out of place.

[13] During recreation the Brothers will very carefully avoid being

## 1718

native place, what they have done, or even what they have seen or heard, saying, for example, "I have seen (or heard) such a thing." They will not speak about drinking, eating, or other bodily wants, or about anything related to these topics.

[8] They will not speak about the lack of regularity of any religious Order or any other Community.

[9] Nor will they speak about what has occurred in the world or what they have learned there, but they will converse on edifying topics that can lead them to love God and practice virtue.

[10] None of the Brothers will inquire about anything curious or useless.

[11] None of the Brothers will ever mimic or make fun of anyone.

[12] None of the Brothers will contradict or disapprove of what the others have said. The Brother Director alone may and ought to do this if it happens that anyone says something out of place.

[13] During recreation the Brothers will very carefully avoid being

1705

disagreeable or troublesome to the others by a gloomy and unsociable exterior, by not speaking at all, or by asking to speak before the one speaking has finished.

[14] They will, however, guard against doing or saying anything through levity or playfulness, making any unbecoming gesture, touching any of their Brothers, speaking too loudly, or breaking out into noisy laughter.

[15] They will also be careful to observe all the rules of modesty, especially in the use of their eyes, not lightly looking from side to side, staring at their Brothers, making signs to them, walking too fast, or hitting their feet too loudly on the ground.

[16] When a Brother withdraws from the place of recreation, he will observe silence all the time he is away from the others.

1718

disagreeable or troublesome to the others by a gloomy and unsociable exterior or by not speaking at all.

[14] They will, however, guard against doing anything through levity or playfulness, making any unbecoming gesture, speaking too loudly, or breaking out into noisy laughter.

[15] They will also be careful to observe all the rules of modesty, especially in the use of their eyes, not lightly looking from side to side, making signs to their Brothers, or walking too fast.

[16] When a Brother withdraws from the place of recreation, he will observe silence all the time he is away from the others.

## Rule of 1705

### Topics on Which the Brothers Ought to Converse During Recreation<sup>11</sup>

1. The reading in the dining room. This is the first thing they ought to talk about during recreation.
2. What they have read about in their spiritual reading.
3. Death, judgment, hell, and heaven.
4. God's secret and public judgments.
5. The life of Jesus Christ and the very special devotion they ought to have for him, reflecting on all his mysteries, especially his divine childhood, his sufferings and death, and his presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, and the ways to acquire this devotion and to procure it for the children.
6. The life of the Most Blessed Virgin and the importance of having great devotion to her, how everything related to her ought to be very dear to them, with what dispositions her Office ought to be recited and her rosary said in the Society, and the many practices that can procure a great devotion for her.
7. The lives of the saints, especially those who are patrons of the Society, such as Saint Joseph and Saint Cassian, or in whom the spirit of

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11. The topic of recreation was a matter for dialogue between the Brothers and De La Salle at the time of the General Chapter in 1717 (Cahiers lasaliens 8, 143ff). Three or four of the Brothers wanted to allow some other activities during recreation besides the topics for conversation, possibly some games such as bowling, ninepins, or quoits. De La Salle asked them to consult with superiors of religious orders for their advice. When they spoke to the Jesuit superior, he conceded that some of these games had crept into their recreation, but he regretted that such relaxation had been allowed, and he advised against any change in the rules for recreation among the Brothers. De La Salle, however, seems to have made one concession: the topics for conversation listed in the Rule of 1705 are not in the Rule of 1718; it may have been sufficient for him that these topics were included in *Collection of Various Short Treatises*. The translation of this part of the Rule of 1705 has been taken, with slight alterations, from the same topics listed in *Collection* (24ff).

## Rule of 1705

our Institute is most manifest; also, those who possessed in a special way the spirit of mortification, interior prayer, and zeal for the salvation of our neighbor, such as Saint John the Baptist, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Ignatius Martyr, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Dominic, Saint Vincent Ferrer, Saint Charles, Saint Francis de Sales, Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Francis Xavier, Saint Philip Neri, Saint Theresa, and so on; also, the devotion we ought to have for them.

8. The several maxims and spiritual practices that the saints used, especially those who withdrew from the world, and those that can inspire a horror for the world and a love for seclusion, to renounce everything, and so forth, especially those that are most in harmony with the spirit of our Institute.

9. The spiritual misery encountered in the world and the dangers to salvation to which those who live in the world are exposed.

10. The advantages and assurances of their salvation they have who live in the Society and have the happiness of being committed<sup>12</sup> to be there.

11. The spirit of the Institute and of the Society, which is the spirit of faith, and its purpose, which is the instruction<sup>13</sup> and education of youth.

12. The grace of their vocation, the Rule and the commandments of the Society, to lead them to observe them perfectly.

13. The ways they ought to follow in the Society to advance and reach perfection.

14. Obedience, which is the first way of perfection in a Community, the advantages it procures and its conditions, the great merit of obedience and the peace of mind and conscience for those who obey in all things with a true simplicity, and the obligation they have of practicing it in the Society.

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12. This commitment is expressed in the vows.

13. For De La Salle the word “instruction” implies Christian education.

## Rule of 1705

15. Seclusion, silence, recollection, and interior spirit, which are the principal ways to advance in perfection, and how to acquire them.

16. Interior prayer, the spirit of faith, the presence of God, and interior recollection, as the principal supports of piety, and the ways to procure them.

17. How to make interior prayer well, the method, the acts they use to make it, and the benefits they are able to gain from it.

18. The great good that the practice of the presence of God procures and the ways to make it easy and frequent.

19. The obligation of the Brothers of the Society to perform all their actions in the spirit of faith and the steps they ought to take to do this well.

20. Everyday actions, the fervor with which they ought to perform them, and the ease they have in the Society to save themselves by doing these daily actions in the spirit of faith and piety, without doing anything else.

21. The great happiness the Brothers have in the Society of accusing themselves every day of their faults, often being advertised of their faults and giving an account of their conscience every week, speaking only of good things during recreation; the great benefits and advantages they can gain from these four exercises, which are the four exterior supports of the Society, and the facility they have by these means to preserve purity of heart.

22. Pious and edifying things that have happened in the Society, provided this is done only in a general way without naming or making known any Brother in particular, unless he is dead.

23. The virtues and the observance of the Rule that the deceased Brothers practiced.

24. Virtues generally, especially those proper to religious.

25. Faults that are contrary to these virtues, except impurity.

## Rule of 1705

26. Virtues that are proper and special for the Brothers of the Society, notably those described in previous articles 14, 15, and 16; union among the Brothers, self-control, gentleness, and patience, which are necessary for them, and the edification they ought to give to their neighbor, and so on.

27. Faults against which they ought to be especially on guard, such as a lack of union and obedience, dissipation, frivolity, breaking silence by signs or words, acting in a natural way, negligence in their exercises, and so on.

28. The good they do or can do in the Society for the salvation of their neighbor.

29. The ways they use or are able to use in the Society to procure the salvation of their neighbor.

30. The obligation of the Brothers in the Society to fulfill their duties in school of instructing the children well, teaching catechism well, and leading them to piety, and the ways of doing all these things well.

31. The different maxims and practices that they can inspire in children to procure for them the spirit of Christianity.

32. The virtues they can practice in school and the faults they ought to avoid there, such as impatience, talking too much, harshness, familiarity, over-indulgence, and so on.

The Brothers will take care during recreation when they discuss these things that have been mentioned, and any other things they discuss during this time, not to be merely speculative but to stay always with what is practical and what always stirs up in them an eagerness for what is good and the virtues that are proper for them.

1705

[Chapter 7]

**How the Brothers Ought to  
Conduct Themselves in  
School**

[1a] The Brothers will conduct schools in all the houses of the Institute except in the house of the novitiate.

[1b] The Brothers will everywhere conduct schools gratuitously, and this is essential to their Institute.

[3] They will teach all their pupils according to the method prescribed for them and universally practiced in the Institute, and they will neither change anything therein nor introduce anything new.

[4] They will teach their pupils to read, first, French; second, Latin; third, letters written by hand.

1718

**Chapter 7**

**How the Brothers Ought to  
Conduct Themselves in  
School with Regard to Their  
Pupils**

[1] The Brothers will everywhere conduct schools gratuitously, and this is essential to their Institute.

[2] They will pay constant attention to three things in school: first, during the lessons, to correct all the words badly pronounced by the pupil who is reading; second, to have everyone who reads follow along in the same lesson; third, to have exact silence kept by the pupils during the whole time of school.

[3] They will teach all their pupils according to the method prescribed for them and universally practiced in the Institute, and they will neither change anything therein nor introduce anything new.

[4] They will teach their pupils to read, first, French; second, Latin; third, letters written by hand, and to write.



## 1705

[5] They will also teach them spelling and arithmetic, all as explained and in the order prescribed in the first part of *The Conduct of Schools*. They will, however, make it their principal care to teach their pupils the morning and evening prayers, the responses at Holy [Mass],<sup>14</sup> the catechism, the duties of a Christian, and the maxims and practices that our Lord has left us in the Holy Gospel.

[6] For this purpose, they will teach catechism daily for half an hour, on the eve of full holidays for an hour, and on Sundays and feasts for an hour and a half.

[7] On school days, the Brothers will take the pupils, at the most convenient hour, to the nearest church for Holy Mass, unless in some place it has been judged entirely impossible by the Superior of the Institute, in which case he will arrange somehow that this does not happen except for a very short time.

[8] They will neither receive nor keep in school any pupil who does not attend catechism on

## 1718

[5] They will also teach them spelling and arithmetic, all as prescribed in the first part of *The Conduct of Schools*. 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.

[6] For this purpose, they will teach catechism daily for half an hour, on the eve of full holidays for an hour, and on Sundays and feasts for an hour and a half.

[7] On school days, the Brothers will take the pupils, at the most convenient hour, to the nearest church for Holy Mass, unless in some place it has been judged impossible by the Brother Superior of the Institute, in which case he will arrange somehow that this does not happen except for a very short time.

[8] They will neither receive nor keep in school any pupil who does not attend catechism on

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14. The word *Mass* is omitted in the 1705 manuscript.

1705

Sundays and feasts as well as on school days.

[11] They 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.

[12] They will not be allowed to keep anything taken from the pupils that they had in their hands, except bad or suspected books, which they will bring to the Brother Director to examine or have examined.

[13] They will love all their pupils tenderly; they will not, however, be familiar with any of them, and they will never give them anything through friendship but only as a reward.

1718

Sundays and feasts as well as on school days.

[9] There will be a Brother in each house to supply the pupils with books, paper, pens, and so forth and to give them ink, free of charge, without requiring from them anything whatever for it.

[10] The Brothers will supply books to the pupils at cost, including all expenses, and these expenses will all be paid in the house that does the printing.

[11] They will not receive from the pupils or their parents any money or presents, however small, on any day or occasion whatsoever.

[12] They will not be allowed to keep anything taken from the pupils that they had in their hands, except bad or suspected books, which they will bring to the Brother Director to examine or have examined.

[13] They will love all their pupils tenderly; they will not, however, be familiar with any of them, and they will never give them anything through particular friendship but only as a reward or an encouragement.

1705

[14] They will manifest equal affection for all their pupils, even more for the poor than for the rich, because they are much more entrusted by their Institute with the instruction of the former than of the latter.

[15] They will endeavor by their whole exterior to give their pupils a continual example of modesty and of all the other virtues they ought to teach them and urge them to practice.

[16] They will not allow any pupil to come or remain around them when they are at their place.<sup>15</sup>

[17] They will not speak to their pupils privately except seldom, through necessity, and in a few words, and when obliged to speak with them, they will always do so standing.

[18] They will not give their pupils any errand, and they will neither give them nor receive from them any letters or notes.

[19] They will not have anything written or copied by any pupil, either for themselves or for any

1718

[14] They will manifest equal affection for all pupils, even more for the poor than for the rich, because they are much more entrusted by their Institute with the former than with the latter.

[15] They will endeavor by their whole exterior and by their entire conduct to give their pupils a continual example of modesty and of all the other virtues they ought to teach them and urge them to practice.

[16] They will not allow any pupil to remain around them when they are at their place.<sup>15</sup>

[17] They will not speak to their pupils privately except very seldom and through necessity, and when obliged to speak with them, they will do so in few words.

[18] They will not give their pupils any errand, and they will neither give them nor receive from them letters or notes to or from outsiders without permission. They may send notes only to the Brother Director, when there is a need.

[19] They will not have anything written or copied by any pupil, either for themselves or for any

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15. That is, at the teacher's place, in front of the class.

1705

other person whatsoever, not even epigrams for the first day of the year.

[20] They will not ask the pupils for any news or allow them to tell any, however good and useful it may be.

1718

other person whatsoever, without the permission of the Brother Director, who will determine if it is necessary.

[20] They will not ask the pupils for any news or allow them to tell any, however good and useful it may be.

1705

[Chapter 8]<sup>16</sup>

## [How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils]

1718

## Chapter 8

## How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils

[1] 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.

[2] When it is necessary for the Brothers to punish any of the pupils, what they will have the most care to do will be to act with great moderation and self-possession and with the conditions prescribed in *The Conduct of Schools*; for this reason, they will never undertake to punish in haste or when they feel irritated.

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16. Chapter 7 in the Rule of 1705, “How the Brothers Ought To Conduct Themselves in School,” was greatly revised by the Directors at their meeting in 1717. Four chapters were developed for the Rule of 1718 out of the one chapter in the Rule of 1705: chapter 7, “How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Their Pupils;” chapter 8, “How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils;” chapter 9, “How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Themselves, Their Brothers, and Outsiders,” 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.” The original thirty-five articles on the school became sixty-three articles. In our two-column presentation, articles from the Rule of 1705 are rearranged to allow for comparison with similar articles from the Rule of 1718. It is clear that the Directors saw a need for these new chapters on the conduct of schools, based on the Brothers’ experiences since the Institute began the Christian Schools more than forty years earlier.

1705

[4] They will carefully avoid calling their pupils any abusive or unbecoming name and never address them otherwise than by their name.

[5] They will take very special care never to touch or strike any pupil with their hand or foot or rebuff or push them rudely.

1718

[3] For this purpose, they will watch over themselves on such occasions so that neither the passion of anger nor the slightest touch of impatience has any part in the correction they impose or in any of their words or actions, being convinced, as they ought to be, that unless they take this precaution, the pupils will not profit from their correction—which is, however, the purpose the Brothers ought to have in administering it—and God will not give it his blessing.

[4] They will very carefully avoid, then and at any other time, calling their pupils any abusive or unbecoming name, and they will never address them otherwise than by their name, nor will they speak to them with any undue familiarity.

[5] They will also be very careful never to touch or strike any pupil with their hand, fist, foot, or pointer, and also not to rebuff or push them rudely. They will never strike them on the face, head, or back.

[6] They will be very careful not to pull their ears, nose, or hair and not to throw a ferule or anything else to make them behave. All such means of correction ought never to be used by the Brothers, all of them being very

1705

1718

unbecoming and opposed to charity and Christian gentleness.

[7] They will not punish their pupils during catechism or prayer, unless they absolutely cannot put off the correction until another time.

[8] The Brothers will not use the ferule away from their place, except for teachers of writing only during the writing lesson.

[9] No Brother will have a switch or rod in school, except the one to whom the Brother Director has assigned this responsibility. If there is an Inspector of Schools present, the Brothers will not correct with the switch or rod without first proposing it to him.

[10] If there is no Inspector of Schools present, the Brothers of the lower classes will correct with the switch or rod only after having proposed it to the teacher in charge and if he has found it appropriate.

[11] Young Brothers who are not yet twenty-one years old will be exact to observe what concerns correction with the switch and rod as prescribed for them in the second part of *The Conduct of Schools*, article five of chapter seven on corrections; this applies also to the Brothers who have reached this age and have not yet taught for one year.

1705

## [Chapter 9]

[How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Themselves, Their Brothers, and Outsiders]

[2] They will not enter any house on the way to school or on returning.

1718

## Chapter 9

How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Themselves, Their Brothers, and Outsiders

[1] It will never be permitted to any Brother, not even to the Brother Director, to go teach in the city<sup>17</sup> for any reason whatever.

The Brothers who teach school in the house will go to their class immediately after three decades of the rosary have been completed, both morning and afternoon, without stopping any place in the house. Those who teach school outside the house will go out together immediately after the litany has been said.

[2] They will not enter any house on the way to school or on returning, without the order of the Brother Director when he considers it necessary.

[3] From the time the Brothers reach school until the beginning of the first prayer, they will remain seated at their place and in

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17. This article probably indicates that some initiative may at one time have been taken by a Brother or the local authorities to have a Brother teach in a school without authorization from De La Salle. It seems clear that all arrangements for the Brothers to work in a school were made by the Founder. A few letters give evidence of this, notably the ones to the mayor and councillors of Château-Porcien (*The Letters of John Baptist de La Salle*, 1) and also to Father Deshayes (33 and 34) and M. Rigoley (35).



1705

[6] They will not read any book in school except those of their class, and each book only during the time they ought to have it in hand to follow that lesson.

1718

silence apply themselves to reading the New Testament. They will do the same at the end of school, when the pupils of their class have been dismissed, while waiting for the dismissal of the last class.

[4] The Brothers will be careful not to leave their place in school without great necessity.

[5] They will not keep anything in their hands during the whole time of school under any pretext whatever.

[6] They will not read any book in school except those the pupils are reading in their class, and each book only during the time they ought to have it in hand to follow that lesson.

[7] If they see any papers, printed sheets, or book in the hands of a pupil other than the one for the actual lesson, they will not look at or read them during the time of school. They may only look at the title of the book after school, and if they judge it contains anything bad, they will take it to the Brother Director to examine or have it examined.

[8] During the prayers they will always remain seated or standing at their place in a very serious, reserved, and dignified manner,

## 1705

[9] They will watch over themselves with great care to do nothing in the presence of their pupils except what is good and becoming and especially not to let anything appear that manifests levity or passion.

[11] The Brothers will not speak in school unless it is absolutely necessary and when they cannot express themselves by signs.

This is why they will always use the signal and the signs that are explained in *The Conduct of Schools*.

## 1718

with arms folded and with great modesty, reciting the prayers themselves in a moderate tone.

[9] They will watch over themselves with great care to do nothing in school except what is good and becoming and especially not to let anything appear that would manifest levity or passion.

[10] Silence being one of the principal means of establishing and maintaining order in school, the Brothers will look upon its exact observance as one of their most important rules. To bring themselves to this exactness, they ought frequently to call to mind that it would be of little use to try to have their pupils observe silence if they themselves were not faithful in this respect. For this purpose, they will be attentive themselves always to employ the signs in use in the schools.

[11] They will, therefore, watch in a special manner over themselves so as to speak very seldom in school and only when absolutely necessary and when they cannot express themselves by signs. Therefore, they will, as a rule, speak on only three occasions: first, when it is necessary to correct a pupil in a lesson and there is no other pupil who is able to say the word correctly that the

1705

[12] The Brothers will always keep open the doors communicating from one class to another, and they will not close them during the time of school under any pretext whatever.

[13] Brothers who will be in classes that are contiguous one to the other will always place themselves so that they can always see each other. They will not change the position of their seat, the benches, the desks, or other school furniture in the room without the order of the Brother Director.

[14] The teacher of one class, however, will not pay attention to what takes place in another unless charged to do so by the Brother Director. If, however, anything out of place happens in a class and another Brother of the same school knows of or sees it, he will not fail to inform the Brother Director of it on the same day.

[15] No Brother will speak to another in school except to the one

1718

other has said incorrectly; second, during catechism; third, in the reflection that each Brother ought to make at both morning and evening prayers, and they will speak only in a moderate tone.

[12] They will always keep open the doors communicating from one class to another, and they will never close them during the time of school under any pretext whatever.

[13] Brothers who teach in classrooms that are contiguous will always place themselves so that they can always see each other. They will not change the position of their seat, the benches, the desks, or other furniture in the room without the order of the Brother Director.

[14] The Brother of one class will not pay attention to what takes place in another unless charged to do so by the Brother Director. If, however, anything out of place happens in a class and another Brother of the same school sees or knows of it, he will not fail to inform the Brother Director of it on the same day.

[15] No Brother will speak to another in school except to the one

## 1705

whom the Brother Director has assigned in each school to be in charge.

[16] No one will speak in school to outsiders, except the one assigned to do this by the Brother Director, and he will give an account the same day to the Brother Director of all those who came to speak in the school, their reasons for coming, and what they did and said.

[17] If it happens that anyone comes to the school to speak to a Brother or to visit him, he will not speak to the person for any reason whatever, neither in the school, in church, nor going to church, but he will send the person to the Inspector or to the teacher in charge, if the Inspector is not present. If it is the Brother Director, the Inspector, or the teacher in charge who is asked for, they will send the person to the house.

[18] They will not allow anyone to enter the schools except priests or a person in authority who wishes to see the schools, and the Inspector or the teacher in charge will always accompany them during the whole time they remain.

## 1718

whom the Brother Director has assigned in each school to be in charge.

[16] No one will speak in school to outsiders, except the one assigned to do this by the Brother Director, and he will give an account the same day to him of all those who came to speak in the school, their reasons for coming, and what they said and did.

[17] If it happens that anyone comes to the school to speak to one of the subordinate Brothers or to visit him, he will not speak to the person for any reason whatever, neither in church nor going to church, but excusing himself politely, he will send the person to the teacher in charge, if the Inspector is not present. If it is the Brother Director or the teacher in charge who is asked for, they will reply in few words. If the matter does not concern the school, they will ask the persons to take the trouble to go to the house.

[18] 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 charge will always accompany them during the whole time they remain.

1705

[19] They may also allow a teacher to enter who wishes to learn how the schools are conducted, provided he has written permission from the Brother Director.

[20] 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 pastor of the parish, some priest delegated by him, or some other priest responsible for the care of the poor of the city.

1718

[19] They may also allow a teacher to enter who wishes to learn how the schools are conducted, provided he has written permission from the Brother Director.

[20] 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.

## Rule of 1718

### 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**

[1] The Brothers will conduct school five days a week when no feast occurs.

[2] On all Sundays and feasts of the school year, that is, during the time they teach school, except the days of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, the Brothers will assemble their pupils in the morning, at the church of the parish in which they conduct school, to have them assist at High Mass. After dinner they will assemble them in the school to teach them catechism, and after having them say evening prayers, they will take them to Vespers in the church where they attend Holy Mass daily.

[3] The Brothers will usually give a holiday all day on Thursday.

[4] When there is a feast during the week, if it falls on Monday, Tuesday, or Saturday, they will give a holiday on Thursday afternoon only. If it falls on Thursday or Friday, they will give a holiday on Tuesday afternoon, but if it falls on Wednesday, they will give a holiday on Friday afternoon.

[5] On All Souls Day, they will give a holiday all day.

[6] On the feast of Saint Nicolas, who is the patron of pupils, and on Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent, they will give a holiday all day instead of Thursday. However, on each of these two days they will have their pupils come to school in the morning, and they will teach them catechism from eight until nine o'clock.

[7] They will give a holiday from Thursday of Holy Week, inclusively, until the following Wednesday, exclusively.

[8] On the feasts of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Most Blessed Virgin, and on other feasts that are not public holidays but are celebrated in the Community, such as the Transfiguration of our Lord, the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the feast of the Presentation and of

## Rule of 1718

the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin, as well as the feast of Saint Joseph, Patron and Protector of the Community, they will give a holiday all day instead of on Thursday.

[9] If there is only one parish in the city and if the feast of the patron of the parish in which the Brothers' house is located is celebrated, they will do as on feast days.

[10] When the feast is celebrated of the patron saint of one of the parishes in which the Brothers' house is not located, but in which they conduct school, they will give a holiday in all the schools instead of on Thursday.

[12]<sup>18</sup> The Brothers will not give an extraordinary holiday without an evident necessity.

[13] They will give a vacation during the whole month of September and never give it at any other time without evident necessity, taking into account the needs of the harvest and of the pupils, and without an express order from the Brother Superior. If it is necessary in some place to give a vacation earlier or later, the Brother Superior of the Institute will designate the day on which it will begin and the day on which it will end.

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18. There is no article numbered 11 in the Rule of 1718; a new article was inserted in the Rule of 1726, directing that a half-holiday be given in any week having five consecutive days of school.

1705

**[Chapter 11]****The Inspector of Schools**

[1] 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 at least twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday, what they have noticed in the conduct of each of the Brothers in his class and whether or not the pupils are improving. This is what will also be done, in the absence of the Inspector, by those charged with the direction of a school.

[2] The Brothers will have a great respect for the Inspector of Schools, not only for the Brother Director but also for all the other Brothers who are entrusted with this office, and likewise the teachers toward the one who, in the absence of the Inspector, has the direction of this school by order of the Brother Director.

1718

**Chapter 11****The Inspector of Schools**

[1] 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 at least twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday, what they have noticed in the conduct of each of the Brothers in his class and whether or not the pupils are improving. This is what will also be done, in the absence of the Inspector, by those charged with the direction of a school.

[2] The Brothers will have a great respect for the Inspector of Schools, not only for the Brother Director but also for all those who are entrusted with this office, and likewise the teachers toward the one who, in the absence of the Inspector, has the direction of this school by order of the Brother Director.



1705

[Chapter 12]

**How the Brothers Ought to  
Conduct Themselves with  
Regard to the Brother Director**

[1] The Brothers will give the title of Superior only to the Brother Superior of the Institute, and they will call Director the Superior of each house and Sub-Director the one who must take the Director's place during his absence.

[2] The Master of Novices will be called the Director of Novices.

[3] The Brothers will always see God in the person of their Director, and they will always be mindful to address themselves to him as one invested with God's authority. They will put themselves in this disposition before presenting themselves to him.

[4] When the Brother Director enters any room, all the Brothers present will stand, greet him with a bow, and keep their calotte<sup>19</sup>

1718

**Chapter 12**

**How the Brothers Ought to  
Conduct Themselves with  
Regard to the Brother Director**

[1] The Brothers will give the title of Superior only to the Brother Superior of the Institute, and they will call Director those who will have the direction of each house and Sub-Director those who must take the Director's place during his absence. They will never call the Superior of the Institute otherwise than our very dear Brother Superior, or their Director otherwise than our dear Brother Director.

[2] The Master of Novices will be called the Director of Novices.

[3] The Brothers will always see God in the person of their Director, and they will always be mindful to address themselves to him as one invested with God's authority. They will put themselves in this disposition before presenting themselves to him.

[4] When the Brother Director enters any room, all the Brothers present will stand, greet him with a bow, and keep their calotte<sup>19</sup>

19. The calotte, as described in the Rule of the Brother Director (Cahiers lasalliens 25, 160), was made of wool and lined in wool and was big enough to come down over the ears. It was worn only in community and in school. In the presence of the Director, a Brother would take it off and put it on

## 1705

off until he is seated or puts his calotte on and makes a sign for them to be seated, except in the refectory, where they will only remove their calotte, without standing up, or in the oratory, where they will make no sign except to bow when the Brother Director passes before them.

[5] When the Brothers speak to the Brother Director, they will remain standing, with their calotte off, during the whole time they speak to him, unless the Brother Director makes a sign or tells them to be seated and to put their calotte on.

[6] They will always speak to the Brother Director with a very profound respect, always in a low voice and in terms that show the veneration they have for him as holding the place of God, whom they ought to recognize and honor in the person of their Director.

[7] They will not pass before the Brother Director without humbly greeting him and bowing to him.

[8] They will have an entire and humble confidence in the Brother Director, and they will make known to him all their mental

## 1718

off until he is seated or puts his calotte on, except in the refectory, where they will only remove their calotte, without standing up, or in the oratory, where they will make no sign except to bow when the Brother Director passes before them.

[5] When the Brothers speak to the Brother Director, they will remain standing, with their calotte off, during the whole time they speak to him, unless the Brother Director makes a sign or tells them to put their calotte on.

[6] They will always speak to the Brother Director with profound respect, always in a low voice and in terms that show the veneration they have for him as holding the place of God, whom they ought to recognize and honor in the person of their Director.

[7] They will never pass before the Brother Director without making him a profound bow.

[8] They will have a humble and entire confidence in him, and they will make known to him all their mental and bodily infirmities, their

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when the Director gave the sign to do so. When a Brother passed the Director or another Brother, he removed it only momentarily, like tipping a cap, as a mark of recognition and respect. The French verb *decouvrir* literally means “to uncover” when speaking of this gesture.

1705

and bodily infirmities, their problems, their temptations, and the attraction or ease and the difficulty they find in the practice of virtue. They will also take very great care to make known to him with simplicity and in detail all that takes place within them.

[9] When they render an account of their conscience and their conduct to the Brother Director, they will do so with the disposition and attitude of making it to God, who knows the depths of their heart.

[10] They will receive with much respect the advice given them by the Brother Director, both in their reddition of conduct and at all other times, as given to them by God, never looking on the Brother Director except as the instrument and the voice of God through whom he makes known to them the means they ought to take to go to him.

[11] They will receive with the same sentiments of respect and submission all the orders and commands of the Brother Director, seeing in him only the authority of God that is communicated to him and his divine Majesty, which he represents for them.

[12] When the Brother Director reproves or admonishes some

1718

problems, their temptations, and the attraction or ease and the difficulty they find in the practice of virtue. They will also take very great care to make known to him with simplicity and in detail all that takes place within them.

[9] When they render an account of their conduct to the Brother Director, they will do so with the disposition and attitude of making it to God, who knows the depths of their soul.

[10] They will receive with much respect the advice given them by the Brother Director, both in their reddition of conduct and at all other times, as given to them by God, not looking on the Brother Director except as the instrument and the voice of God through whom he makes known to them the means they ought to take to go to God.

[11] They will receive with the same sentiments of respect and submission all the orders and commands of the Brother Director, seeing in him only the authority of God that is communicated to him and his divine Majesty, which he represents for them.

[12] When the Brother Director reproves or admonishes some

## 1705

Brother, if that Brother is seated, he will stand and take off his hat;<sup>20</sup> if he is standing, he will kneel down, kiss the floor, and not resume his former posture until the Brother Director makes him a sign to do so.

[13] The Brothers will not make any reply to the admonitions, reproofs, or commands given them either by the Brother Director or in his name, and they will forthwith set out to do what the Brother Director has ordered or caused to be ordered, though they find it painful and difficult.

It will be sufficient that a thing is commanded them that they find it neither difficult nor impossible. They will so act as to put themselves in this disposition through a simple view of faith, because nothing is difficult or impossible for God and because he cannot fail to give the necessary grace and help to do what he commands.

[14] The Brothers will have the same submission and respect for

## 1718

Brother, if that Brother is seated, he will stand with his calotte off; if he is standing, he will kneel down and not resume his former posture until the Brother Director makes him a sign to do so, but if he is on his knees, he will only kiss the floor.

[13] They will not make any reply to the admonitions, reproofs, or commands given them either by the Brother Director or in his name, and they will forthwith set out to do what he has ordered or caused to be ordered, though they find it painful and difficult.

It will be sufficient that a thing is commanded them that they find it neither difficult nor impossible, unless it is contrary to the commandments of God. They will so act as to put themselves in this disposition through a simple view of faith, because nothing is difficult or impossible for God and because he cannot fail to give the necessary grace and help to do what he commands.

[14] The Brothers will have the same submission and respect for

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20. The Rule of 1705 uses the word *chapeau* in this sentence, whereas *calotte* might be expected because the meeting would be indoors. The Rule of the Brother Director (Cahiers lasalliens 25, 160) describes the hat (*chapeau*) of the Brothers as six inches wide and four and a half inches high. It is to be worn out-of-doors, not in the house or in school. This sentence may represent a time when the hat was worn, before the *calotte* was introduced, or it may only be a mistake by the Brother who made copies of the Rule of 1705.

1705

him who holds the place of the Brother Director in his absence, but they will not ask for, nor will he grant them, any permission unless it is necessary and they absolutely cannot wait for the return or the presence of the Brother Director to carry it out, and they will not ask for any permission that the Brother Director has refused them.

[14a] When a Brother (even a Director) goes to a city where there is a house of the Institute, when he will only be there in passing and for a short time, upon arriving he will first go straight to the house, where he will obey in all things the Director of that house and not do anything without his order and permission during the entire time he stays in that city.

1718

him who holds the place of the Brother Director, but they will not ask for, nor will he grant them, any permission unless it is necessary and they cannot wait for the return or the presence of the Brother Director, and they will not ask for any permission that the Brother Director has refused them.

1705

[Chapter 13]

**How the Brothers Ought to  
Conduct Themselves Toward  
One Another**

[1] The Brothers will have a cordial affection for one another but not give any sign or token of particular affection for anyone, through respect for our Lord, whom they ought to honor equally in all as being animated by him and living by his Spirit.

[2] They will take a singular pleasure in rendering service to their Brothers; they will not do so, however, without the permission and by the order of the Brother Director.

[3] When they pass before their Brothers, they will remove their calotte and greet them, without looking at them, to show the respect they have for them.

[4] They will always speak to their Brothers in a respectful manner, without affectation or idle civility but with Christian and religious simplicity, without giving rise to familiarity.

1718

Chapter 13

**How the Brothers Ought to  
Conduct Themselves Toward  
One Another; the Union That  
Ought to Exist Among Them**

[1] The Brothers will have a cordial affection for one another but not give any sign or token of particular affection for anyone, through respect for our Lord, whom they ought to honor equally in all as being animated by him and living by his Spirit.

[2] They will take a singular pleasure in rendering service to their Brothers; they will not do so, however, without the permission and by the order of the Brother Director, except in a pressing necessity.

[3] When they pass before their Brothers, they will remove their calotte and greet them modestly.

[4] They will always speak to their Brothers in a respectful manner, without affectation or idle civility but with Christian and religious simplicity, without giving rise to familiarity.

[5] They will take care not to say anything to their Brothers except what is proper and becoming,

1705

1718

even when they give or have given them trouble.

[6] They will always prefer their Brothers to themselves in all things, insofar as the Rule and obedience permit them, in view of the esteem they have for them and out of respect for God residing in them. For this reason, if anything is presented to all of the Brothers or to someone else and themselves, and if they are free to choose, they will take what is least, considering their Brothers much above themselves.

[7] They will not contradict their Brothers or contend with them, but they will yield to them through respect for them.

[8] If any of their Brothers advances some maxim that either is not true or may have evil consequences, they will combat it only by their silence, being convinced as they ought to be that it is only the Superior of the Institute or the Brother Director of the house in which he resides who has the right to correct him. Nevertheless, he who has heard a Brother say anything reprehensible will inform the Brother Superior of the Institute or the Brother Director of the house where he resides, in case he did not see that the Brother Director had noticed it and reprovved him for it.

1705

[10] They will not speak to any Brother in the house without the order or the permission of the Brother Director.

[11] When two Brothers go out together, they will not speak to each other unless it is absolutely necessary.

[12] They will not speak about their Brothers except when necessary, and they will never say anything except what is good about them or speak about them except with esteem and great respect.

On all occasions, especially when obliged to speak with outsiders, they will show by every exterior sign the esteem, the respect, and the sincere, true, and interior union they have with their Brothers, and they will never let it appear by either their words or their gestures that they have any trouble with any of them.

1718

[9] All the Brothers will have as much respect for the serving Brothers as for the school Brothers, and no one among them will say anything to them or to any person about them except what is proper and becoming, and they will show on every occasion that they are truly united with them and very grateful for the services they provide for them.

[10] They will not speak to any Brother in the house without the order and the permission of the Brother Director.

[11] When two Brothers go out together, they will not speak to each other unless it is absolutely necessary.

[12] They will never speak about their Brothers except when necessary, and they will never say anything except what is good about them or speak about them except with esteem and great respect.

On all occasions, especially when obliged to speak with outsiders, they will show by every exterior sign the respect, the esteem, and the sincere, true, and interior union they have with their Brothers, and they will never let it appear by either their gestures or their words that they have any trouble with any of them.



1705

[13] There will be no rank order among the Brothers; in the usual exercises they will take places without distinction or where the Brother Director will assign them, except for the Brother Director and the Sub-Director, who will have the first two places.

[14] When two Brothers go out together, the younger will give preference to the older. On entering a house, the one who has to transact business will take precedence, but only in the house in which he has business to transact, if he is the younger.

[15] When two Brothers leave the house, each of them will ask the Brother Director's permission before leaving, and on their return, they will go to greet him and to give him an account of the places they have been, the persons with whom they have spoken, and all that they have said or done outside, whether together or with others.

1718

[13] There will be no rank order among the Brothers in the usual exercises, except that the Brother Director and the Sub-Director will have the first two places; the Brothers will take places without distinction or where the Brother Director will assign them; he can change their places whenever he judges it proper.

[14] When two Brothers go out together, the younger will give preference to the older. On entering a house, the one who has to transact business will take precedence, but only in the house in which he has business to transact, if he is the younger.

[15] When two Brothers leave the house, each of them will ask the Brother Director's permission before leaving, and on their return, they will give him an account of the places they have been, the persons with whom they have spoken, and all that they have said or done outside, whether together or with others.

1705

**[Chapter 14]****How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders**

[1] The Brothers of this Institute will not have any communication or conversation with outsiders without a well-recognized necessity.

[2] The Brothers will respect all outsiders with whom they have dealings, without forming particular friendships with any.

[3] They will break off all relationships they had in the world, even with their relatives, and they will not keep any, even under the pretext of promoting the welfare of their house or of the Institute.

[4] They will not make any visits of civility; they will not bring them about in any way whatever and will so act as to receive them rarely and through necessity.

[5] When a Brother is visited by anyone (and means will be taken that this be very seldom), the Brother Director will go himself with him or send another Brother to keep him company, and nothing will be said or done except in his presence and seen by him; he

1718

**Chapter 14****How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders**

[1] The Brothers of this Institute will not have any communication with outsiders without a well-recognized necessity and only with the permission of the Brother Superior or the Director.

[2] The Brothers will respect all outsiders with whom they have dealings, without forming friendships with any.

[3] They will break off all relationships they had in the world, even with their relatives, and they will not keep any, even under the pretext of promoting the welfare of their house or of the Institute.

[4] They will not make any visits of civility; they will not bring them about in any way whatever and will so act as to receive them rarely and through necessity.

[5] When a Brother is visited by anyone, and means will be taken that this be very seldom, the Brother Director will go himself with him or send another Brother to keep him company, and nothing will be said or done except in his presence and seen by him; he

1705

will also hear all that is said, unless the Brother Director, for some important reason, has ordered otherwise.

[6] If it is a person of the other sex who visits and speaks to any of the Brothers, even to the Brother Director, there will always be a Brother present who will be a witness to all that takes place during this time.

[7] When the Brothers converse with outsiders, they will observe very strict silence on all that concerns the Institute, never making anything thereof be known or appear abroad, not telling where the Brothers are, even when asked. They may only speak of and explain the purpose of the Institute, the exterior employments in which they engage, and what is done in these employments, without allowing themselves to say anything more.

[8] They will not approach any persons in or outside the house to speak to or greet them, and if anyone accosts them, they will reply politely and only in a few words to what has been asked, without saying anything more.

1718

will also hear all that is said, unless the Brother Director, for some important reason, has ordered otherwise.

[6] If it is a person of the other sex who visits and speaks to any of the Brothers, even to the Brother Director, there will always be a Brother who will be a witness and will see all that takes place during this time.

[7] When the Brothers converse with outsiders, they will observe very strict silence on all that concerns the Institute, making nothing thereof appear or be known abroad, never telling where the Brothers are, even when asked, unless they cannot do otherwise. They may only speak of and explain the spirit of the Institute, the exterior employments in which they engage, and what is done in these employments, without allowing themselves to say anything more.

[8] They will not approach any persons in or outside the house to speak to or greet them, and if anyone accosts them, they will reply politely and only in a few words to what has been asked, without saying anything more.

[9] If anyone on the street shows them a letter whose address he

1705

[10] They will not meddle with any temporal concern, and they will not undertake any that is spiritual unless it is conformable to the purpose and spirit of the Institute. The Brothers Director will be very careful about this matter.

[11] They will not write or copy anything for any outsider.

1718

cannot read, they may read only the address.

[10] They will not meddle with any temporal concern, and they will not undertake any that is spiritual unless it is conformable to the spirit and purpose of the Institute. The Brothers Director will be very careful about this matter.

[11] They will not write or copy anything for any outsider without the permission of the Brother Superior of the Institute.

[12] No one may be lodged in the houses of the school except the postulants who have been admitted for one night only by the Brother Superior of the Institute.

[13] It will not be permitted to receive boarders in the houses of the school. There may be boarders in the novitiate house or in a house intended for this purpose when the Brother Superior, with the advice of the Assistants, deems it proper, but they will not be taught the Latin language.

## Rule of 1718

### Chapter 15<sup>21</sup>

#### How the Serving Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves

[1] The serving Brothers may go out alone for the needs of the house. The Brother Director will give each of them a written regulation specifying how they are to spend the time remaining at their disposal, and he will send a copy of it at once to the Brother Superior for his approval, if he finds it suitable, or his modification of what is not agreeable to him.

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21. This is a new chapter for the Rule of 1718. As early as 1692, De La Salle had introduced the practice of having serving Brothers to relieve the Brothers of the double burden of teaching and caring for the temporal needs of the community. Brother Thomas Frappet was probably the first to be designated for this role (*The First De La Salle Brothers*, 68–78). In the beginning, the Founder seems to have made no distinction between the school Brothers and the serving Brothers, and only a brief reference is made to them on two occasions in the Rule of 1705. But in a letter to Brother Hubert in 1710 (*Letters*, 12), De La Salle seems to have conceived the plan to have serving Brothers exercise the role of coadjutor for temporal affairs alongside the spiritual role of the Brother Director, similar to the organization of the Jesuits. There also seems to have been resistance to this by some of the Directors. This new chapter for the Rule of 1718 may indicate that De La Salle accepted the original organization of a single administrator for community life. The way the chapter is composed gives the impression that it was not written by De La Salle but by the Brothers, working as a committee of the whole at the General Chapter of 1717. It was, of course, reviewed and approved by the Founder but probably not revised.

At some point in the early development of the status of the serving Brothers, they did not take the vow of teaching the poor gratuitously, and they were given brown robes. Unfortunately, in the course of time the serving Brothers came to be regarded as second-class Brothers; also, some became teaching Brothers, and it seems that some teaching Brothers became serving Brothers (*The First De La Salle Brothers*, 125). At the General Chapter of 1810, when the Institute was restored after the French Revolution, the distinction in vows and in the color of the robe was discontinued. The chapter on the serving Brothers was kept in the Rule of 1947, although the title was changed to “Brothers Engaged in Temporal or Material Work.” The new Rule of 1987 does not have any such chapter; what it says is that “the Brothers build community by the joyful gift of themselves for the service of others” (chapter 4, “Community Life,” article 49).

## Rule of 1718

[2] They will not interfere with anything in the house in which they reside, except what obedience prescribes for them.

[3] They will work in the school when the Brother Superior judges it necessary and only for as long as he orders them, but they cannot insist on being employed there.

[4] Those who have charge of expenses will, on an appointed day every week, give an account of them to the Brother Director of the house where they reside.

[5] They will watch over themselves so as to be exact in keeping silence, speaking always in a low voice, and not speaking except when necessity requires it and then only in a few words.

[6] The one who attends the door will not speak to any Brother, whether going out of the house or coming in, not even to the Brother Director. If he is obliged to speak to the Brother Director when he enters, he will wait until he has said his prayer in the oratory.

[7] He will not speak to any Brother except to the Brother Director, unless it is necessary and he has previously obtained the Brother Director's permission.

[8] They will be careful so to serve at table that they are able to leave the refectory at the same time as the other Brothers, without being obliged to return there to eat.

[9] They will not buy anything without the order of the Brother Director except the meat, as regulated, and the bread.

[10] They will take care to remember that they do not have the use of money except dependently on the Brother Director, not as owner of it. Hence they will consider themselves responsible to God for the use they make of it, especially if they spend it without permission.

[11] They will also be careful to manage their time so that they may always be able to assist regularly at all the usual spiritual exercises and to say the rosary at eight o'clock in the evening in the oratory, leaving everything for this purpose at the first sound of the bell.

## **Rule of 1718**

[12] If it happens on some extraordinary occasion that they are unable to assist at some exercise, they will not omit it without the permission of the Brother Director.

[13] They will watch over themselves so as to speak to the Brother Director always in a low voice, even when giving an account of the expenses or their errands in the city, in view of always speaking to him with respect.

[14] They will also speak in a moderately low voice when talking to outsiders, including while attending the door.

[15] They will not have any communication with outsiders except insofar as their work requires and the Brother Director permits them; these two conditions will be inseparable.

[16] They will be careful not to have any communication with outsiders that might give rise to familiarity.

[17] They will also take special care to apply themselves to their interior life, to exert themselves in the practice of the virtues that become them, and to guard against dissipation of mind and becoming too exterior in their temporal work.

[18] The serving Brothers will take care to fulfill their exterior duties with great charity, having in view that the service they give their Brothers is rendered to our Lord himself and that for this reason they ought to endeavor to render it with as much care and affection as they would have in serving Jesus Christ himself.

## Rule of 1718

### Chapter 16

#### Regularity<sup>22</sup>

[1] It is necessary that the Brothers apply to themselves and take for the foundation and support of their regularity what Saint Augustine says at the beginning of his Rule: those who live in a Community ought before all else to love God and then their neighbor because these are the principal commandments given us by God and because any regularity whatever, if separated from the observance of these two commandments, is quite useless for salvation, for regularity is established in Communities only to give their members the facility to observe the commandments of God with exactness, and most of the rules are practices pertaining to the commandments. For example, silence and circumspection in their words during recreation are of such great importance to avoid falling into many sins that Saint James does not hesitate to say that the tongue is a world of iniquity and full of deadly poison. Respect for and submission to the Brother Superior and the Brother Director are of obligation and precept, as are union with their Brothers and reserve in regard to persons of the world for fear of taking on their spirit, for which the devil gives most people a natural inclination that causes them to form attachments when they communicate frequently and freely with them. Modesty and recollection prevent the Brothers from committing a great number of sins that they commit by the eyes and by the liberty with which they use the other members of the body, and so on.

[2] The Brothers will, therefore, have an altogether special esteem for all that concerns regularity, no matter how insignificant it may appear, regarding it as being for them the first means of sanctification, because it is in this that they find the principal help to observe the

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22. This is another new chapter added to the Rule of 1718. The title of this chapter, *Régularité*, means the practice of observance of the Rule. The first article is, like the first article in chapter 2, an expression of the Founder's clear understanding at the end of his life about what is of primary importance in the Rule and in the life of the Institute he created. It seems probable that De La Salle wrote this entire chapter on his own initiative: it is characteristic of his logical development of thought, especially in articles 2, 3, and 4; there is also the inclusion in article 8 of what he had written in *Collection of Various Short Treatises* (4–5).



## Rule of 1718

commandments of God and the principal support against all the temptations of the devil, however violent they may be, and because God attaches his graces to such observance in a special manner.

[3] Regularity is also the principal support of Communities, and it is such as to make them immovable as long as it subsists therein. Irregularity is the chief source of their destruction and of the loss of their members. In this view, the Brothers will prefer the rules and practices of their Institute to all other practices, however holy they may be in themselves, unless they concern the commandments of God and of the Church.

[4] Each of the Brothers will apply himself particularly to do nothing that is or could be contrary to the regularity and good order of the house. For this purpose they will all make an account of their failing in the least point of regularity, wishing to do in all things and very exactly the will of God, which is marked out for them by the rules and practices of their Institute.

[5] The Brothers will leave everything at the first sound of the bell to be present at the beginning of the exercises.

[6] No Brother will absent himself from the daily exercises of examen, spiritual reading, interior prayer, and so forth without an evident necessity and without the permission of the Brother Director.

[7] They will be careful to close all the doors of the house quietly.

[8] The Brothers will look upon the following as most essential to their Institute:

The four interior supports of the Institute:

- a) Interior prayer
- b) The presence of God
- c) The spirit of faith
- d) Interior recollection

The four exterior supports of the Institute:

- a) The reddition of conscience
- b) The accusation
- c) The advertisement of defects
- d) The manner of spending recreation well

## Rule of 1718

There are ten commandments proper to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, which they ought always to keep in mind to meditate on and in heart to practice, and which they ought to make the subject of their examen:<sup>23</sup>

- 1) Due honor to Superiors pay,  
and in their person God obey.
- 2) In love with all your Brothers live,  
and God in you true rest will give.
- 3) With ardent zeal your strength employ  
in teaching gratis youth with joy.
- 4) Let faith alone your actions guide,  
and leave all other views aside.
- 5) Let all the time of mental prayer  
be well employed with love and care.
- 6) God ever present you'll adore  
and oft his grace and aid implore.
- 7) Your mind and senses always curb,  
and let them not your peace disturb.
- 8) The rule of silence strictly keep,  
and thus in heaven treasure heap.
- 9) By recollection keep so chaste  
that of heavenly bliss you may foretaste.
- 10) From earthly goods your heart retain,  
and heaven itself will be your gain.

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23. The French text of the ten commandments of the Institute is written in rhyming verse; to preserve a tradition of happy memory, the editor offers this traditional English version, also in rhyming verse.

1705

1718

## Rules Concerning Special Virtues<sup>24</sup>

### [Chapter 17]

#### Poverty

[1–2] The Brothers will have nothing of their own; all things will be for common use in each house, even the clothing and other necessary things for the use of the Brothers, which the Brother Superior of the Institute may change or cause to be changed or taken away when he judges it proper.

[3] The Brothers will have nothing for their personal use except a New Testament, an *Imitation of Christ*, a rosary, and a crucifix, which will all be the same and given to them by the one responsible for providing for the needs of the Community.

### Chapter 17

#### Poverty

[1] The Brothers will have nothing of their own; all things will be for common use in each house, even the clothing and other necessary things for the use of the Brothers.

[2] The Brother Superior of the Institute may change or take away their clothing when he judges it proper.

[3] The Brothers will have nothing for their personal use except a New Testament, an *Imitation of Christ*, a rosary, a crucifix made of ebony wood with the figure of Christ in copper, and a small wallet, which will be given to them during the novitiate by the one responsible for providing for the needs of the entire Society.

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24. This heading is given only in the Rule of 1705, which groups the following four chapters without numbering them. The chapter on silence in the Rule of 1705 is the first chapter under this heading; in the Rule of 1718, it is inserted without any number between chapters 20 and 21. It should be noted that poverty and chastity were not vows for the Brothers until the Institute was approved by the Church in 1725. This fact may be related to the question of De La Salle's intent about the Institute's status in the Church and about why he never sought Rome's official recognition during his lifetime. The Rule of 1726 inserted two new chapters, numbered 17, "The Vows," and 18, "Obligations of the Vows." The numbering in Cahiers lasalliens 25 and in this present volume follows that of the Rule of 1787.

## 1705

[4] The Brothers who teach writing classes will have, besides the foregoing, a writing case without inkwell, belonging to the house where they live, in which there will be a penknife and some pens, which they will leave in the house when they go to another one.

[5] They will receive nothing from anyone, not even from their relatives, and if it happens that something is given to the house for their use, the Brother Director will not allow them to make use of it.

[6] They will take nothing from one house to another, unless it be such items as are mentioned above that ought to be for their personal use.

[6a] The school Brothers will not have any money, except when traveling, after which they will give to the Brother Econome everything that is left over and render an account of their expenses on the journey.

## 1718

[4] The Brothers who teach writing classes will have, besides the foregoing, a writing case in which there will be a penknife and some pens, which they will have for their use when teaching an advanced class.

[5] The Brothers will not receive or borrow anything from anyone, not even from their relatives, and they will not lend anything to anyone; if it happens that something is given to the house for their use, the Brother Director will not allow them to make use of it.

[6] They will take nothing from one house to another, unless it be such items as are mentioned above that ought to be for their personal use.

[7] The Brothers will always bear marks of poverty in their clothing, provided it be decent, that is, not torn, and they will not wear hat, robe, mantle, or shoes that are not of the same material and style as those of the others.

1705

[9] They will dispose of nothing whatever without the order of the Brother Director and give nothing to one another, not even a holy card or a pin.

1718

[8] The Brothers will possess nothing, and if they have any property, they will surrender the income from it to their relatives or to the Society, without being allowed to have the use of it, and if they have some money on entering, they will surrender it to the Society.

[9] They will dispose of nothing whatever or give anything to one another without the order of the Brother Director.

1705

[Chapter 19]<sup>25</sup>

## Chastity

[1] The Brothers ought to be convinced that no one will be tolerated in the Institute in whom anything exterior against purity has appeared or appears.

[2] For this purpose, their first and chief care in regard to their exterior will be to make chastity shine forth in them above all the other virtues.

[3] To preserve this virtue with all the care it requires, they will show great reserve in all things.

[4] They will be careful never to see or to allow themselves to be seen in a manner even the least immodest. The first garment they will put on when rising and the last they will take off on retiring will be their robe; they will never go to bed without their breeches.

[5] Two Brothers will not sleep together. If sometimes they are obliged to do so when traveling, they will go to bed without undressing.

1718

## Chapter 19

## Chastity

[1] The Brothers ought to be convinced that no one will be tolerated in the Institute in whom anything exterior against purity has appeared or appears.

[2] For this purpose, their first and chief care in regard to their exterior will be to make chastity shine forth in them above all the other virtues.

[3] To preserve this virtue with all the care it requires, they will show great reserve in all things.

[4] They will be careful never to see or to allow themselves to be seen in a manner even the least immodest. The first garment they will put on when rising and the last they will take off on retiring will be their robe; they will never go to bed without their breeches.

[5] Two Brothers will not sleep together. If sometimes they are obliged to do so when traveling, they will go to bed without undressing.

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25. There is no chapter numbered 18 in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718. Chapter 17, "The Vows," and chapter 18, "Obligations of the Vows," were inserted in the Rule of 1726, published after the Institute received the Bull of Approbation.

1705

[6] They will not touch one another, not even in play or through any kind of familiarity, this being very unbecoming and contrary to the respect they owe to one another as well as against decency and modesty.

[7] They will not touch their pupils through playfulness or familiarity, and they will never touch them on the face.

[8] They will take great care to conduct themselves in a very wise and restrained manner when correcting their pupils, and they will watch over themselves very much before and during this time.

[9] When speaking to persons of the other sex, they will always keep some steps away and never look them steadily in the face.

[10] They will never speak to them except in a very reserved manner and far from the least liberty or familiarity.

[11] 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.

1718

[6] They will never touch one another, not even in play or through any kind of familiarity, this being very unbecoming and contrary to the respect they owe to one another as well as against decency and modesty.

[7] They will not touch their pupils through playfulness or familiarity, and they will never touch them on the face.

[8] They will take great care to conduct themselves in a very wise and restrained manner when correcting their pupils, and they will watch over themselves very much before and during this time.

[9] When speaking to persons of the other sex, they will always keep some steps away and never look them steadily in the face.

[10] They will never speak to them except in a very reserved manner and far from the least liberty or familiarity.

[11] 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.

1705

[Chapter 20]

Obedience

[1] The Brothers will carefully apply themselves and be concerned never to obey except with views and motives of faith.

[2] They will be very exact to leave everything at the first sound of the bell and at the first sign of the Brother Director, with the view that it is God who calls and commands them.

[3] They will not enter any place without permission, except where the exercise is taking place at that time. They will not leave the house or the room where they are without permission, and when they return, they will kneel to adore God and not rise without permission.

[4] They will not read any books or papers without permission, and they will not copy anything without the written permission of the Superior of the Institute,

1718

Chapter 20

Obedience

[1] The Brothers will carefully apply themselves and be concerned never to obey except with views and motives of faith.

[2] They will be very exact to leave everything at the first sign of the Brother Director, with the view that it is God who calls and commands them.

[3] They will not enter any place without permission, except where the exercise is taking place at that time. They will not leave the house or even the room where they are without permission.

[4] They will not read any book or paper, and they will not copy anything without the permission of the Brother Director. They may copy hymns, the rules and practices of the Institute, arithmetic, catechism, and all that may be of use in the Community.

[5] The Brother Director will never allow these kinds of things to be copied except during the time allowed for writing, and he will inform the Brother Superior of all



1705

[6] and all books, whether catechisms, spiritual books, or others, will be given to them by the Brother Director and distributed by the Brother in charge of these things, with no one allowed the liberty of selecting, much less attributing to himself the right to read, any other books than those given to him.

[7] When they have some need, they will simply mention it to the Brother Director without asking for anything. They will do the same with regard to all their bodily infirmities.

[8] To be sure of doing the will of God in all things, they will not do anything without permission, however small and insignificant it appears.

1718

the permissions he has given and to whom.

[6] All books, whether catechisms, spiritual books, or others, will be given out by the Brother in charge of these things, with no one allowed the liberty of selecting, much less attributing to himself the right to read, any other books than those given to him.

[7] When they have some need, they will simply mention it to the Brother Director without asking for anything. They will do the same with regard to all their bodily infirmities.

[8] To be sure of doing the will of God in all things, they will not do anything without permission, however small and insignificant it appears.

## 1705

Silence<sup>26</sup>

[1] The Brothers of this Institute will keep strict silence outside the time of recreation, and they will not speak to one another for any reason whatever without the permission of the Brother Director.

[2] When a Brother has a need and the permission to speak either to another Brother or to an outsider, he will then only speak about what needs to be said, and he will observe especially exactly the following five articles.

[3] 1. He will not speak about what has happened in any house of the Institute, the affairs of the house where he lives, or the conduct of any of the Directors of the Institute.

[4] 2. He will not speak about any of the Brothers or those who have been in the Society. If someone speaks to him about either, he will say that he may not answer such questions and that it is necessary to speak to the Brother Director.

[5] 3. He will not speak about himself, his relatives, his native place, or what he has done, except to persons for whom he

## 1718

## Chapter on Silence

[1] The Brothers of this Institute will keep strict silence outside the time of recreation, and they will not speak to one another for any reason whatever without the permission of the Brother Director.

[2] When a Brother has a need to speak outside the time of recreation either to another Brother or to an outsider, he will then only speak about what needs to be said, and he will observe especially the following articles.

[3] 1. He will not speak about what has happened in any house of the Institute, the affairs of the house where he lives, or the conduct of the Brothers Director.

[4] 2. He will not speak about any of the Brothers or those who have been in the Society. If someone speaks to him about either or questions him about them, he will say that he may not answer such questions and that it is necessary to speak to the Brother Director.

[5] 3. He will not speak about himself, his relatives, his native place, or what he has done, except to persons for whom he

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26. These two headings are as in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718.

1705

ought to have very special respect, such as a bishop, not wishing to be known except insofar as necessary to God alone and to his Superiors.

[6] 4. He will not speak about drinking or eating or about other bodily needs, except with the permission or by order of the Brother Director, never making anything about these matters known to others than his Superiors.

[7] 5. He will speak to another Brother only about what he has been ordered or allowed by the Brother Director, without saying anything more.

[8] When a Brother, even the Brother Director, needs to speak, he will do so in a low voice.

[9] The Brothers will not speak either in the oratory during the exercises going on there or in the refectory during the meals, unless it be to the Brother Director for some urgent need.

1718

ought to have very special respect, such as a bishop who might question him about these matters, not wishing to be known except insofar as necessary to God alone and to his Superiors.

[6] 4. He will not speak about drinking or eating, except with the permission or by order of the Brother Director, not making anything about these matters known to others than his Superiors.

[7] 5. He will speak to another Brother only about what he has been ordered or allowed by the Brother Director, without saying anything more.

[8] 6. When a Brother, even the Brother Director, needs to speak, he will do so in a low voice and in a few words.

[9] The Brothers will not speak either in the oratory during the exercises going on there or in the refectory during the meals, unless it be to the Brother Director for some urgent need.

[10] They will not speak to the Brother Director while going from one exercise to another or during the accusation and the advertisement of deflects, unless the matter be such an urgent necessity that it cannot be deferred, and

1705

[14] They will keep very rigorous silence from the time of evening retiring until after interior prayer the next morning; they will not speak even to the Brother Director during this time without an indispensable necessity.

1718

then they will speak in a few words.

[11] The Brothers will carefully refrain from inquiring of any Brother about what has happened in any of the houses of the Institute, not even concerning any of the Brothers.

[12] When the Brothers go together in the city, they will not speak to one another unless it is absolutely necessary, but they will say the rosary, each by himself, and on their return they will give an account of what they said and did while they were out.

[13] When they go to school, they will not speak to one another but always say the rosary alternatively, both going to and returning from school.

[14] They will keep very rigorous silence from the time of evening retiring until after interior prayer the next morning; they will not speak even to the Brother Director during this time without an indispensable necessity.

[15] The Brothers will be brief in speaking with the parents of the pupils.

## Rule of 1718

### Chapter 21

#### Modesty<sup>27</sup>

[1] It can be said in general that it is necessary that the Brothers manifest in all their exterior actions great modesty and humility, together with the wisdom befitting their profession. But in particular to have the modesty that becomes them, they will especially observe the following practices.

[2] First, they will always hold their head erect, inclined slightly forward; they will not turn around or from side to side, and if necessity obliges them to do so, they will at the same time turn their whole body sedately and with gravity.

[3] They will manifest cheerfulness on their countenance rather than sadness or any other ill-regulated passion.

[4] They will usually have their eyes cast down without raising them unduly or turning them from side to side.

[5] They will avoid wrinkling the forehead or especially the nose, so that people may see in their exterior the wisdom that lies within them.

[6] Recollection will appear to the Brothers of such great importance that they will consider it as one of the principal supports of the Society and want of the custody of the eyes as the source of all kinds of disorders in a Community.

[7] When speaking especially to persons of authority and distinction, and much more especially to persons of the other sex, they will not look them steadily in the face but be very reserved in their regard. They will not keep their lips too closely pressed together or too open.

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27. This chapter on modesty, added by De La Salle to the Rule of 1718, is taken, with slight changes, from the *Collection* (74–75). The meaning of the word *modesty* in his time was quite different than its meaning today in the United States of America. This chapter gives a good description of what the word meant for De La Salle. Saint Paul's use of the word is another example of the difficulty in defining the meaning of modesty. (See *Meditations*, 480.)

## Rule of 1718

[8] When they have to speak, they will be mindful of the modesty that becomes them and the edification they ought to give their neighbor, as much by their words as by their manner of speaking. This is why they will take care not to speak too much, too loud, or too fast and not to make any sign or gesture with either their head or their hands.

[9] They will keep their hands quiet and their arms becomingly folded, refrain from making gestures with their hands while speaking, and never have their arms hanging down or their hands in their pockets.

[10] They will keep their feet nearly together when at rest, without crossing them; they will not keep their legs wide apart, stretch them out, or cross them when seated.

[11] They will walk sedately and in silence, with great reserve in their looks and in their whole exterior, without swinging their arms back and forth and without overhaste, unless some necessity requires it.

[12] When they go from one exercise to another, they will walk one behind the other to avoid confusion.

[13] They will be careful that their gestures and all the movements of their body be such that they can edify everyone. If there are two or three together in the house, they will observe the order prescribed for them by the Superior or by the Director.

[15]<sup>28</sup> Finally, they will always keep their clothes neat and clean, and they will wear them with the dignity and modesty becoming a person of their profession.

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28. There is no article numbered 14 in the Rule of 1718; a new article was inserted in the Rule of 1726, directing that when two or three Brothers leave the house, they should keep the order prescribed for them by the Brother Director.

1705

Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute

[Chapter 22]

Illnesses

[1]<sup>29</sup> Requests for help in any illness will never be made to relatives, and none of the Brothers will ever be permitted to have recourse to his relatives for remedies or anything else that he needs in any illness or infirmity, but all that is necessary for each of the Brothers will be given to him.

1718

Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute

Chapter 22

The Sick

[1] Requests for help in any illness will never be made to relatives, and none of the Brothers will ever be permitted to have recourse to his relatives for remedies or anything else that he needs in any illness or infirmity whatever, but all that is necessary for each of the Brothers will be given to him.

Rule of 1718

[2] It will not be allowed for sick Brothers to be taken to hospitals.

[3] Care will be taken that they have a very charitable infirmarian to minister to all their needs with affection and tenderness, who will give them exactly and at the proper time the remedies and nourishment that they need. When necessary, the sick will be looked after during the night.

[4] The needs of the sick will always be attended to preferably to the needs of those who are in good health.

[5] The sick, however, will take care not to complain of anything if something is lacking for them, but if a considerable time elapses before they receive the remedy or relief prescribed for them that they believe to be useful, they will simply tell the Brother Director and then remain quiet and without anxiety in this matter, whether or not it be given to them.

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29. This is the only article on the sick in the Rule of 1705.

## Rule of 1718

[6] The sick will obey their infirmarian as their Director, since he is given to them by God to direct them during all the time of their illness.

[7] They will be attentive to bear their illness with patience, often calling to mind the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ and the holy martyrs so as to imitate them.

[8] They will animate themselves from time to time with good sentiments, if they are able. If they are not able, they will ask the infirmarian to give them this kind service, in order that they may not lose sight of God and may conform to his intentions.

[9] Care will be taken to have the sick receive the sacraments without too much delay and to see that they receive the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick while they are alert, in order that it may procure for them the greatest abundance of grace and enable them to participate in the special effects that belong to the sacraments.

[10] When a Brother is in his agony or when it is judged that death is imminent, all the Brothers who are not in school will gather to say the prayers for the dying for his intention to free him from the attacks of the devil, which are very strong and violent at this time, and to contribute as far as they are able to help him enjoy the blessing of a happy death.

[11] If it happens that a Brother falls ill with some sickness that is likely to be prolonged, the Brother Superior of the Institute will be notified as soon as it is perceived, in order that he may take the necessary means to restore his health.

[12] The Brothers will not give any remedy outside the house for any illness whatever. If they know of a remedy that is asked of them for an outsider, only the Brother Director may give it or provide the name of it in writing, without leaving the house or seeing the sick person for this purpose.

[13] The Brothers will not keep vigil with the sick or the dead outside the house.



1705

1718

[Chapter 23]<sup>30</sup>

## Chapter 23

## Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers

## Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers

[1] The Brothers will be buried with much simplicity and in keeping with the holy poverty that they profess.

[2] The Brothers, each with a taper in his hand, will follow the corpse.

[3] There can be no general rule for either the tapers or the tolling of the bell at the burial of the Brothers; these details will be regulated by local customs.

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30. The articles placed here in the column under the Rule of 1705 (“Prayers To Be Said for Deceased Brothers”) and numbered according to later editions of the Rule are not actually in the Rule of 1705; they are from *Pratique du Règlement journalier*, a manuscript of twenty-one pages, preserved in the Archives of the Generalate in Rome (AMG, SBF). Dated 9 March 1713, *Pratique* represents the development of the daily regulations that De La Salle and the Brothers began to formulate from the beginning of the Institute, adapting them as they learned from the experience of everyday living. Subsequent chapters in this present column for the Rule of 1705 also borrow from *Pratique*.

It is interesting to note that *Pratique* uses the future tense in the excerpts displayed under this chapter 23, on prayers for the dead, but that the texts of *Pratique* inserted as chapters 27, 28, 29, and 30 of the Rule of 1705 are in the present tense (with a few exceptions), whereas the Rule of 1705 itself uses the future tense uniformly. Does this represent a shift from a simpler social relationship to a more institutional style? At the least, it may indicate that some texts in the present tense are part of the early formulation of the Brothers’ way of life and that those in the future tense (such as the regulations for the novitiate) are a later development.

We can here make another observation about this present translation of the Rule: the word “shall” in earlier English texts has been changed to “will,” and the word “should” has been changed to “ought to” throughout the text.

## 1705

[4] When a Brother of the Society dies, the following prayers will be offered for him.

[7]<sup>31</sup> If he has made vows for all his life, the house where he died will have thirty Masses said consecutively for him, at the first of which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion. Before the first of these Masses, the Brothers of that house will recite the Office of the Dead, nine lessons, in the oratory at a time judged by the Brother Director to be most convenient. During the thirty days following his death, the Brothers of that house will recite for him, after the meals, the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina, Domine*. On the thirtieth day, when the anniversary Mass is said for him, all the Brothers there will receive Holy Communion; after the *De Profundis* the Collect *Deus Indulgentium* will be said instead of *Inclina*.

## 1718

[4] When a Brother of the Society dies, the following prayers will be offered for him.

[7] If he has made vows for all his life, the house where he died will have thirty Masses said consecutively for him, at the first of which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion. Before the first of these Masses, the Brothers of that house will recite the Office of the Dead, nine lessons, in the oratory at a time judged by the Brother Director to be most convenient. During the thirty days following his death, the Brothers of that house will recite for him, after the meals, the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina, Domine*. On the thirtieth day, when the anniversary Mass is said for him, all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion; after the *De Profundis* the Collect *Deus Indulgentiam* will be said instead of *Inclina*.

[9] The Brothers who are poor and unable to have all thirty Masses offered will notify the Brother Superior of the Institute so that he may have the goodness to provide this for them.

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31. There are no articles numbered 5 and 6 in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718; two new articles were inserted in the Rule of 1726, specifying the Masses to be offered and the prayers to be said for the deceased Brother Superior General.

## 1705

[10] In the other houses, the Brothers will recite the Office of the Dead, nine lessons, for him and have three Masses said consecutively, at the first of which they will receive Holy Communion, and for each of these three days they will recite after the meals the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina*.

[11] If the deceased Brother had made vows only for three years, the house in which he died will have ten Masses said consecutively, at the first of which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion. Before the first Mass, the Brothers of that house will recite the Office of the Dead, nine lessons, at a time judged by the Brother Director to be most convenient, and during these first ten days following his death, they will recite for him, after the meals, the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina, Domine*.

[12] For a Brother who had made vows only for three years, the Brothers in the other houses will recite the Office of the Dead, three lessons only, and have only one Mass said, at which they will all receive Holy Communion. The same day, they will recite in the oratory after the meals the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina*.

## 1718

[10] In the other houses, the Brothers will recite the Office of the Dead, nine lessons, for him and have three Masses said consecutively, at the first of which they will receive Holy Communion, and for ten days they will recite after the meals the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina*.

[11] If the deceased Brother had made vows only for three years, the house in which he died will have ten Masses said consecutively, at the first of which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion. Before the first Mass, the Brothers of that house will recite the Office of the Dead, nine lessons, at a time judged by the Brother Director to be most convenient, and during these first ten days following his death, they will recite for him daily, after the meals, the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina, Domine*.

[12] For a Brother who had made vows only for three years, the Brothers in the other houses will recite the Office of the Dead, three lessons, and have only one Mass said, at which they will all receive Holy Communion. The same day, they will recite after the meals the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina*.

## 1705

[13] If the deceased Brother is a novice or had made no vows, the Brothers of the house where he died will recite the Office of the Dead, three lessons only, and have three Masses said consecutively, at the first of which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion. After the meals on each of these three days, they will recite the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina*.

[14] In the other houses, the Brothers will have only one Mass said for him, at which all will receive Holy Communion. The same day, after the meals, they will recite in the oratory the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina, Domine*.

[15] Every year during vacation, at the end of the retreat the Brother Director of each house will choose the most convenient day to celebrate the anniversary of all the deceased Brothers and benefactors.

[16] At four o'clock in the afternoon, they will recite Vespers and Matins of the Office of the Dead. The next day, after morning interior prayer, they will recite Lauds, after which they will assist at a Mass offered for all the deceased Brothers and benefactors, at which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion.

## 1718

[13] If the deceased Brother is a novice or had made no vows, the Brothers of the house where he died will recite the Office of the Dead, three lessons, and have three Masses said consecutively, at the first of which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion. After the meals on each of these three days, they will recite the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina*.

[14] In the other houses, the Brothers will have only one Mass said for him, at which all will receive Holy Communion. That same day, after the meals, they will recite the Psalm *De Profundis* with the Collect *Inclina, Domine*.

[15] Every year during vacation, at the end of the retreat the Brother Director of each house will choose the most convenient day to celebrate the anniversary of all the deceased Brothers and benefactors.

[16] At four o'clock in the afternoon, they will recite Vespers and Matins of the Office of the Dead. The next day, after morning interior prayer, they will recite Lauds, after which they will assist at a Mass offered for all the deceased Brothers and benefactors, at which all the Brothers will receive Holy Communion.

1705

1718

[17] If requested, two Brothers may attend the funeral of deceased founders,<sup>32</sup> benefactors who have done a considerable favor for the house, or the parish priest or confessor, provided it is not during the time of school.

[18] The Brothers may go to the church for the funeral of their mother or father only if they live in the same locality where they died, but care ought to be taken to see that this does not happen.

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32. The founders referred to are persons who “found” a Christian School by establishing an endowment whose annual income provides the minimum salary of the Brothers teaching there. The early biographies of De La Salle contain dozens of names of benefactors and founders, such as Pontcarré of Rouen, Gense and De Béthune of Calais, and De La Cocherie of Boulogne.

1705

## [Chapter 24]

Travel<sup>33</sup>

[1] The Brothers will usually travel on foot<sup>34</sup> and stay at inns, not in monasteries or private homes, unless directed to do so by the Brother Director, who will give them in writing the route they are to follow. They will never lodge with relatives of any of the Brothers of the Institute.

[2] They will undertake no journey except to go from one house of the Institute to another or for the needs of the Institute, and they will not go to any house in

1718

## Chapter 24

## Travel

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33. This text is from the Rule of 1705, not from *Pratique*.

34. Blain's account of a journey by De La Salle gives a good idea of how far the Founder could walk in an hour. In the summer of 1687, word came to Reims that a dying Brother in Guise was earnestly begging to have the Founder come to him. De La Salle set out with a Brother who had come from Laon with this message; the same Brother gave Blain a note describing the journey. They left at one o'clock in the afternoon and walked until nightfall, when they took lodging in a rustic inn about three leagues short of Laon. Laon was about ten leagues from Reims, so they walked about seven leagues in seven hours, presuming that they stopped at about eight in the evening. A league is two and a half miles, so they walked about two and a half miles an hour. De La Salle was thirty-six years old and probably not too accustomed to walking great distances, for he may not have given away his wealth until 1685. Also, Blain tells us that it was a hot summer day, that he was wearing a soutane and a heavy mantel besides the usual hair shirt, and that his blood pressure rose to a point where he was bleeding profusely from the nose. (*The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, book 2, chap. 6, 237–38.) A younger Brother under better conditions could probably walk three or four miles an hour.

In this article of the Rule, the French word *hôtelleries* has been translated "inns," the public lodging for ordinary travelers. To maintain simplicity in the Brothers' way of living, De La Salle preferred these inns to the more comfortable accommodations at monasteries or private homes.

1705

the city or the country for recreation, even because of infirmity, unless it belongs to the Institute.

[3] No Brother will be sent out alone on foot unless it cannot be avoided and unless he has been at least five years in the Institute and is of very reliable behavior.

1718

the city or the country for recreation, even because of infirmity, unless it belongs to the Institute.

[3] No Brother will be sent out alone on foot unless it cannot be avoided and unless he has been at least five years in the Institute and is of very reliable behavior.

[4] The food of the Brothers during their travel will be frugal and conformable to the manner of living followed in the Society, especially with regard to drink, a matter of very great importance.

[5] They will be careful not to associate or form an acquaintance with anyone and not to act with freedom or familiarity with anyone whatever, especially with any person of the other sex.

[6] They will daily read a page of the New Testament and a page of *The Imitation of Christ*, which will serve as their spiritual reading.

[7] They will also, even while walking, make interior prayer with as much application as will be possible for them.

[8] They will be careful to give edification in all the places where they lodge and to behave there, as well as on the road, in a reserved and religious manner.

1705

1718

[9] When traveling, the Brothers will not change their route to call at any house of the Institute without the order of the Brother Superior of the Society.

[10] They will not eat or drink in more than two places, including the house from where they set out, and they will not eat more than four times a day without an extraordinary need.

[11] They will take care that their conversations be prudent and a subject of edification for others, and they will not speak on topics that they are not permitted to discuss when they are in the house.

[12] They will always be together and not leave one another, either on the road or in the houses in which they lodge; when there are more than two, any two will not be allowed to separate from the others to converse privately, nor will anyone be permitted to speak alone with seculars.

[13] When they have completed their journey, they will hand over to the Brother Director what they have left of their money, then give an account of their expenses and of the manner in which they conducted themselves on their journey, according to the *Directory* drawn up for this purpose.



1705

[Chapter 25]

Letters

[1] All the Brothers will write at the beginning of each month to the Brother Superior of the Institute.

[4] They also may write to him any time they think they need it, either for the good of their souls or for any other reason; when

1718

Chapter 25

Letters

[1] All the Brothers will write every two months to the Brother Superior of the Institute, according to the *Directory*. The Brother Director will write every month, giving an account the first month of his conduct and the articles on regularity and on the next month of the Brothers and the schools. Brothers who may have need to write will join their letters with the Brother Director's when he gives the account of his conduct.

[3]<sup>35</sup> When the Brothers write to the Brother Superior of the Institute, the Brother Director will receive from them all their letters, put them with his own, and seal it in the presence of all the Brothers during one of the exercises; when he receives the reply to these letters, he will in like manner open the packet in the presence of all the Brothers and give each one his letter.

[4] The Brothers may write to the Brother Superior any time they think they need it, either for the good of their souls or for any

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35. There is no article numbered 2 in the Rule of 1718; a new article was inserted in the Rule of 1726, directing the Brothers to add the word *seul* (only) to the address of any letter sent to the Brother Superior regarding matters of conscience.

## 1705

they write to him outside the usual and appointed time, they will not be obliged to give any reason to the Brother Director; however, they will ask for his permission, which he will never refuse them.

The Brothers will not write letters out of friendship or kindness, or to relatives, and they will not write any without an evident necessity and without permission.

If it happens that one or more houses are too distant from the one where the Superior of the Institute lives to be able to write to him every month, he will appoint a Director of one of these houses that is closer, to whom all the Brothers of these houses will write every month, with the understanding that all the Brothers of these houses will write at least ever six months to the Superior of the Institute about their conduct during the previous six months, repeating what they wrote to the Director appointed and what the Director wrote to them, noting the particular advice he gave to them.

[5] All letters will be read by the Brother Director before they are received from anyone or sent to anyone to whom they are addressed, except for those written to the Superior of the Institute or received from him.

## 1718

other reason; when they write to him outside the usual and appointed time, they will not be obliged to give any reason to the Brother Director; however, they will ask for his permission, which he will not refuse; when they write to him outside the prescribed time, they will show the address on the outside of the letter to the Brother Director, and these letters will be taken to the post office by the Brother appointed for this purpose.

[5] All letters addressed to the Brothers by outsiders or by Brothers of the Society and all those they write will be read by the Brother Director before giving them to the Brothers or sending them, except for those from the Brother Superior of the Institute

1705

1718

or from the Brother charged with answering for him in his absence, and also those written by the Brothers or other persons to the Brother Superior of the Institute.

[6] When a Brother finds in the house a letter or note that is or had been sealed, he will be very careful not to read it, as he could commit a considerable sin by reading it; rather, he will faithfully give it to the Brother Director. The Brothers will do the same regarding letters or notes that have not been sealed.

[7] When a Brother without vows has read a sealed or unsealed letter that is not addressed to him and that is written to or received from the Brother Superior, he will make three months of the novitiate for the first offense; for the second offense, he will be sent away. If the Brother has vows for all his life, he will make three months of the novitiate for the first offense and six months for the second offense.

**How to begin their letters**

My very venerable Brother,  
I offer you my most humble respect  
and obedience, as obliged by God.

**How to close them**

I am, with very profound respect, my  
very venerable Brother, your very  
humble and very obedient inferior,  
Brother N.

1705

## [Chapter 26]

## The Latin Language

[1] 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.

[2] It will not even be allowed for anyone to read any Latin book or to speak a single word of Latin without an absolute and indispensable necessity by order of the Brother Director.

[3] There will not be any exclusively Latin book in any of the houses of the Institute except the Office books. There will also not be any that might serve to learn the Latin language, and if there are any Latin books translated into the vernacular, having Latin on one side and the vernacular on the other, it will not be permitted to read them except by those who are thirty years of age and in whom no liking for Latin has been noticed, unless it is a public reading and they read the vernacular only.

1718

## Chapter 26

## The Latin Language

[1] 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.

[2] It will not even be allowed for anyone to read any Latin book or to speak a single word of Latin without an absolute and indispensable necessity and by order of the Brother Director when, for example, an occasion presents itself to speak to a stranger who does not know the vernacular and knows Latin.

[3] There will not be any exclusively Latin book in any of the houses of the Institute except the Office books. There will also not be any that might serve to learn the Latin language, and if there are any Latin books translated into the vernacular, having Latin on one side and the vernacular on the other, it will be not be permitted to read them (unless in a public reading) except by those who are thirty years of age and in whom no liking for Latin has been noticed, and they will read the vernacular only.

1705

[Chapter 27]

Daily Exercises for the School  
Communities

[1] The Brothers will rise at all times at 4:30. The one who rings the bell for rising will get up as soon as the alarm strikes, but not later than 4:15. At the first sound of the bell, the Brother Director or the one appointed will say in a loud voice that may be heard by everyone, "Live, Jesus, in our hearts!" and the other Brothers will answer, "Forever!"

1718

Chapter 27

Daily Exercises

[1] The Brothers will rise at all times at 4:30. The one who rings the bell for rising will get up as soon as the alarm strikes, but not later than 4:15. At the first sound of the bell, the Brother Director or the one appointed will say in a loud voice that may be heard by everyone, "Live, Jesus, in our hearts!" and the other Brothers will answer, "Forever!" This is the greeting of the Community.

[2] When the Brother who has been appointed to awaken the Brothers has rung for rising, he will take lights to the dormitories when necessary. He will do the same after evening prayer, and care will be taken that they are put out before 9:15.

[3] Forty strokes will be rung for rising, and about twenty strokes in full swing for the other exercises, after which twenty strokes will be tolled for interior prayer, Holy Mass, examen, supper, and evening prayer; thirty strokes will be tolled for breakfast and for retiring.<sup>36</sup>

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36. There is no article numbered 4 in the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718; a new article was inserted in the Rule of 1726, directing that thirty strokes of the bell be tolled for breakfast and for retiring.

## 1705

[5] The Brothers will have a quarter of an hour for dressing and for making their bed.

[6] At 4:45 the Brothers will go to the common room, which they will not enter before being entirely dressed, after having combed their hair and washed themselves, and then each will read by himself in *The Imitation* during the time that remains.

[7] At 5:00 they will say vocal prayers for a short quarter of an hour and then make interior prayer until 6:00.

[9] From 6:00 until 7:15, they will assist at Holy Mass and occupy themselves in writing or reading French, Latin, or letters written by hand to become proficient therein as regulated by the Brother Director and according to the order he has received from the Superior of the Institute.

## 1718

[5] The Brothers will have a quarter of an hour for dressing and for making their bed.

[6] At 4:45 thirty strokes will be tolled, and the Brothers will go to the common room, but not before being entirely dressed; after they have washed themselves, each will read by himself in *The Imitation* during the time that remains.

[7] At 5:00 they will say vocal prayers for a quarter of an hour; then the subject for meditation will be read, followed by interior prayer until 6:00.

[8] Spiritual reading may be made either in the New Testament or in *The Imitation* from 5:45 to 6:00; “Live, Jesus . . .” will be said at 5:45 and *O Domina mea* at 6:00. If they go to Holy Mass at 6:00, they will not say *O Domina mea* until after Holy Mass.

[9] At 6:00 they will assist at Holy Mass. From the time of Holy Mass until 7:15, the Brothers will occupy themselves in writing or reading French, Latin, or letters written by hand to become proficient therein as regulated by the Brother Director and according to the order he has received from the Brother Superior of the Institute.

1705

[11] At 7:15 the Brothers will have breakfast in the refectory, and during this time there will be reading in the *Rules for School* or in a book of instruction.

[12] They will begin to read in the *Rules for School* on the first day they return to school after vacation and on the day after the Easter holidays, and each time they will read the first two parts consecutively from beginning to end, and during the remaining time of the year they will read in a book of instruction.

[13] There will not be a reader who reads during the entire time of a meal, but at each meal all the Brothers will take part in the reading.

[14] The Brother Director will read first, unless there are six other Brothers, and all will read in turn, one after the other, when notified by the Brother Director.

1718

[10] From 15 November to 15 January inclusive, they will study catechism in the morning and writing in the afternoon, until spiritual reading, which will be at 5:30. The Brothers of the advanced classes may work on reading handwritten letters and on arithmetic.

[11] At 7:15 the Brothers will have breakfast in the refectory, and during this time there will be reading in the *Rules for School* or in a book of instruction.

[12] They will begin to read in the *Rules for School* on the first day they return to school after vacation and on the day after the Easter holidays, and each time they will read the first two parts consecutively from beginning to end, and during the remaining time they will read in a book of instruction.

[13] There will not be a reader who reads during the entire time of a meal, but at each meal all the Brothers will take part in the reading.

[14] The Brother Director will read first, unless there are six other Brothers, and all will read in turn, one after the other, when notified by the Brother Director.

## 1705

[15] 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.

[16] After the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus, the Brothers who teach school in the house will say the first three decades of the rosary on their knees, and those who teach in schools outside the house will leave to go there and say the rosary both in the morning and in the afternoon while going and returning.

[17] The schools will start at 8:00 and end at 11:00, including the time of Holy Mass and prayers, after which the pupils will be dismissed, two by two, separated from one another by a short distance.

[19] At 11:30 they will make particular examen, after which they will make the accusation of faults, and then they will have dinner.

[20] During dinner they will read, first, in the New Testament: the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; second, the abridgment

## 1718

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[17] The schools will start at 8:00 and end at 11:00, including the time of Holy Mass and prayers, after which the pupils will be dismissed, two by two, separated from one another by a short distance.

[18] After school they will study catechism.

[19] At 11:30 (on fast days as well as on other days) they will make the particular examen, after which they will have dinner.

[20] During dinner they will read, first, in the New Testament: the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles; second, the abridgment



1705

of the life of a saint; third, in a book of piety, and toward the end, some lines consecutively from *The Imitation of Christ*, up to the fourth book, which they will not read.

[21] After dinner they will all take recreation together until 1:00.

[22] 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.

[23] Then the Brothers who teach school in the house will say the last three decades of the rosary on their knees, and those who teach in schools outside the house will leave to go there, as in the morning.

[24] The schools will start in the afternoon at 1:30 and end at 4:00.

[25] At 4:00 the Brothers will teach the pupils catechism.

[26] At 4:30 they will have the pupils say evening prayer slowly and distinctly, after which they will sing a hymn, at most six stanzas, and then dismiss the pupils.

1718

of the life of a saint; third, in a book of piety, and toward the end, some lines consecutively from *The Imitation of Christ*, up to the fourth book, which they will not read.

[21] After dinner they will all take recreation together until 1:00 (on fast days as well as other days).

[22] 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.

[23] Then the Brothers who teach school in the house will say the last three decades of the rosary on their knees, and those who teach in schools outside the house will leave to go there, as in the morning.

[24] The schools will start in the afternoon at 1:30 and end at 4:00.

[25] At 4:00 the Brothers will teach the pupils catechism.

[26] At 4:30 they will have the pupils say evening prayer slowly and distinctly, after which they will sing a hymn, at most six stanzas, and then dismiss the pupils.

## 1705

[27] 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.

[29] At 5:30 the bell will be rung for spiritual reading, which all the Brothers will make by themselves in the common room, to dispose themselves for interior prayer; they will begin by reading half a page in the New Testament on their knees. At 6:00 the bell will be rung for interior prayer.

## 1718

[27] 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.

[28] After school they will study catechism during the time that remains until spiritual reading.

[29] At 5:30 (on fast days as well as on other days) the bell will be rung for spiritual reading, which all the Brothers will make by themselves in the common room, to dispose themselves for interior prayer; they will begin by reading half a page in the New Testament on their knees.

[30] When the weather is favorable, they may make spiritual reading in the garden after having said the *Veni Sancte*.

[31] At 6:00 the bell will be rung for interior prayer, which they will make until 6:30.

[32] When the Brother Director has not been able to make interior prayer with the community, he will make it for a quarter of an hour at his bedside after evening prayer if he has been unable to do so before.

1705

[33] At 6:30 they will make the accusation of faults and then have supper.

[34] During supper they will read, first, in the New Testament: the Epistles of the holy Apostles and the Apocalypse; second, a chapter of Bible history; third, in a book of piety, and toward the end, some lines from *The Imitation*.

[35] After supper all will take recreation together until 8:00; at 8:00 the Brothers will assemble in the common room, where they will study catechism.

[36] At 8:30 they will say night prayer in the oratory, after which the subject for interior prayer for the next day will be read. At 9:00 the bell for retiring will be rung, and then all will go to the dormitory and be in bed by 9:15.

1718

[33] At 6:30 they will make the accusation of faults and then have supper.

[34] During supper they will read, first, in the New Testament: the Epistles of the holy Apostles and the Apocalypse; second, a chapter of Bible history; third, in a book of piety, and toward the end, some lines from *The Imitation of Jesus Christ*.

[35] After supper all will take recreation together until 8:00; at 8:00 the Brothers will assemble in the common room, where they will study catechism.

[36] At 8:30 they will say night prayer in the oratory, after which the subject for interior prayer for the next day will be read. At 9:00 the bell for retiring will be rung, and then all will go to the dormitory and be in bed by 9:15.

1705

**[Chapter 28]****Special Exercises for Sundays  
and Feasts in the School  
Communities**

[1] On Sundays and feasts all will receive Holy Communion at Holy Mass and then make thanksgiving for half an hour.

Then there will be public reading of the New Testament, then a recitation and explanation, either before or after Mass, depending on the hour at which they usually hear it, unless there is not enough time for the Brothers to bring the pupils to the parish Mass.

[2] At 8:00 the Brothers will gather in the oratory,<sup>37</sup> where they will recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus; after that the Brothers who teach school in the house will say the first three decades of the rosary. After the litany those who assist at the parish Mass with their pupils will leave the house and say the rosary while going and returning.

[3] After the rosary those who remain in the house (if there are any) will write until 9:30.

1718

**Chapter 28****Special Exercises for Sundays  
and Feasts**

[1] On Sundays and feasts, after interior prayer, they will assist at Holy Mass, at which all will receive Holy Communion and make thanksgiving for half an hour.

On their return from Holy Mass, there will be reading of a chapter of the New Testament, with an explanation of the same chapter and a discussion about it until 8:00.

[2] At 8:00 the Brothers will have breakfast and then go to the oratory,<sup>37</sup> where they will recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus; after that the Brothers who teach school in the house will say the first three decades of the rosary. After the litany those who assist at the parish Mass with their pupils will leave the house and say the rosary while going and returning.

[3] After the rosary those who remain in the house, if there are any, will write until 9:30.

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37. Apparently, breakfast was not scheduled on Sundays and feasts in the Rule of 1705. See De La Salle's letter to Brother Mathias (*Letters*, 63.4): "Why do you want breakfast on Sundays and feast days?"

1705

[4] At 9:30 they will study catechism. If there is not enough time for writing and the study of catechism, they will prefer the study of catechism to writing.

At 10:00 the bell will be rung, and they will make spiritual reading until 10:30 to dispose themselves for interior prayer.

At 10:30 the bell will be rung and they will make interior prayer until 11:00. At 11:00 they will make the particular examen and then the accusation of faults, after which they will have dinner, and they will not say the *Angelus* until after dinner.

[5] After dinner they will take recreation until 12:30.

[6] At 12:30 they will assemble in the oratory and say the Litany of Saint Joseph; then those who teach school in the house will say the last three decades of the rosary; after the litany those who go to schools outside the house will leave to teach catechism, and they will say the rosary going and returning.

[7] At 1:00 the Brothers will begin catechism and teach it until 1:30 by questioning on the principal mysteries.

1718

[4] At 9:30 they will study catechism. If there is not enough time for writing, they will prefer the study of catechism to writing.

At 11:00 the bell will be rung for the examen, after which they will have dinner.

[5] After dinner they will take recreation until 12:30, even if the bell for the examen had been rung after 11:00 because of the lateness of the parish Mass.

[6] At 12:30 they will assemble in the oratory and say the Litany of Saint Joseph; then those who teach school in the house will say the three decades of the rosary; after the litany those who go to schools outside the house will leave to teach catechism, and they will say the rosary going and returning.

[7] At 1:00 the Brothers will begin catechism and teach it until 1:30 by questioning on the principal mysteries.

1705

[8] At 1:30 they will begin the catechism on a special subject, which will be done for one hour.

[9] At 2:30 the prayer will be said, after which they will take the pupils to church to assist at Vespers, if it can be done conveniently; if not, they will dismiss them in order for each to assist at Vespers in his own parish.

[10] The Brothers who do not assist at Vespers in the parishes with their pupils will go to the oratory at 3:00, where they will recollect themselves until 3:15.

1718

[8] At 1:30 they will begin the catechism on a special subject, which will be taught for one hour.

[9] At 2:30 the prayer will be said, after which they will take the pupils to church to assist at Vespers, if it can be done conveniently; if not, they will dismiss them in order for each to assist at Vespers in his own parish.

[10] While the Brothers are teaching catechism, if any remain in the house, they will study and recite catechism.

[11] In places where Vespers are said at 2:00, they will teach catechism at 12:30 on the principal mysteries, and at 1:00 they will teach on a special subject until 2:00, and prayer will not be said. At 2:00 they will take the pupils to Vespers.

[12] After Vespers the pupils will be sent home, and the Brothers will perform the exercises they omitted in the morning.

[13] In places where Vespers are said at 2:30, catechism will begin at 12:30, and the prayer will be said at 2:00. After Vespers the Brothers will say three decades of the rosary and employ the remaining time until 4:00 in the study of catechism.

## 1705

[14] At 3:15 they will recite Vespers and Compline of the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin; if they finish before 4:00, they will remain in the oratory until the clock has struck 4:00.

[15] At 4:00, at the end of Vespers, they will take recreation until 4:30. At 4:30 the Brothers will go to the common room, where they will make spiritual reading until 5:15 to dispose themselves for interior prayer.

[16] At 5:15 they will make interior prayer until 6:00.

At 6:00 there will be a recitation on interior prayer, and then the Brother Director will give a conference<sup>38</sup> on the subject of interior prayer.

## 1718

[14] The Brothers who do not assist at Vespers with the pupils in the parish churches will go to the oratory at 3:30, where they will recite Vespers and Compline of the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin; if they finish before 4:00, they will remain in the oratory until the clock has struck 4:00.

[15] At 4:00, after Vespers on Sundays and feasts, they will take recreation until 4:45; at 4:45 they will make spiritual reading.

[16] At 5:30 they will make interior prayer.

At 6:00 there will be a conference<sup>38</sup> until 6:30, and the rest of the day will be observed as prescribed.

[17] When there are several feasts in the week, the Brother Director will give a conference on Sunday

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38. The French *entretien* is translated by the English “conference” because this word in English designates a former practice in community of the Director’s regularly giving a talk to the Brothers. Actually, the word, in both French and English, does not mean so much giving a talk as holding a discussion. It is possible that sometimes this is what the early Brothers did, though not necessarily all the time when the Rule uses *entretien*. Sometimes it seems to mean that the Director gave an instruction or lesson on a topic. The word “conference” will be used throughout this translation except as noted where two French words, *conférence* and *entretien*, are used as alternative actions; in that case *conférence* is translated as “discussion.” See note 43, page 139.

1705

[18] At 6:30 they will make the accusation, have supper, and perform the remaining exercises as on other days.

1718

and on the day of the principal feast; when he cannot give a conference, he will have a good book read and then ask the views of several Brothers in the form of a conference.

[18] At 6:30 they will make the accusation, have supper, and perform the remaining exercises as on other days.

[19] On Sundays they will teach catechism at 8:00 in the evening, and the Brothers questioned will not ask any questions of the one who teaches the catechism; they will answer with much wisdom and modesty.

[20] The Brothers will teach this catechism in turn, after having prepared themselves for it.



1705

## [Chapter 29]

**Special Exercises for Holidays  
in the School Communities**

[1] When they have a holiday all day on Thursday, they will teach catechism on Wednesday afternoon for one hour from 3:30, during the snack, until 4:30, and in the winter, when prayer is said at 4:00, from 3:30 to 4:00, half an hour on the principal mysteries and half an hour on the subject of the week.

[2] When they give holiday in the afternoon only, they will shorten the lessons in the morning and teach catechism during the last half hour of school; this cannot be the same everywhere, because Holy Mass cannot perhaps be heard everywhere at the same hour; the catechism will be taught on the subject of the week.

[3] At 11:30 the Brothers who teach school in the house will say the last three decades of the rosary, and the bell will not be rung until 11:45 for examen.

[4] The days on which they have holiday all day, they will at 6:00 read for a quarter of an hour in the fourth book of *The Imitation* to dispose themselves for Holy Communion.

1718

## Chapter 29

**Special Exercises for Holidays**

[1] When they have a holiday all day on Thursday, they will teach catechism on Wednesday afternoon for one hour from 3:30, during the snack, until 4:30, and in the winter, when prayer is said at 4:00, from 3:00 to 4:00, half an hour on the principal mysteries and half an hour on the subject of the week.

[2] When they give holiday in the afternoon only, they will shorten the lessons in the morning and teach catechism during the last half hour of school; this cannot be the same everywhere, because Holy Mass cannot perhaps be heard everywhere at the same hour; the catechism will be taught on the subject of the week.

[3] On half holidays they will make the examen at 11:30 as on ordinary days. Those who have not finished the rosary will be careful to complete it.

[4] The days on which they have holiday all day, they will at 6:00 read for a quarter of an hour in the fourth book of *The Imitation of Jesus Christ* to dispose themselves for Holy Communion.

## 1705

[5] They will assist at Holy Mass, at which they will receive Holy Communion and then make thanksgiving for half an hour. If anyone does not receive Holy Communion, he will remain during this time in a sentiment of adoration before the Most Holy Sacrament.

[6] Then they will have breakfast and use the rest of the time until 8:30 to practice handwriting.

They will regulate this time in such a way that what cannot be done before will be done after and what cannot be done after will be done before.

At 8:30 they will keep busy at work on the rules of arithmetic until 9:00. They will do everything in each house at the most convenient time, according to what is regulated by the Superior of the Institute.

[7–8] At 9:00 the bell will be rung, and they will assemble in the oratory, where they will recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus and then the rosary.

After the rosary they will make spiritual reading by themselves in the common room.

At 10:30 the bell will be rung for interior prayer, which they will make until 11:00. At 11:00 they will make particular examen and then have dinner; they will not say the *Angelus* until after dinner.

## 1718

[5] They will assist at Holy Mass, at which they will receive Holy Communion and make thanksgiving for half an hour. If anyone does not receive Holy Communion, he will remain during this time in a sentiment of adoration before the Most Holy Sacrament.

[6] At 7:15 they will have breakfast. After breakfast they will practice handwriting until 9:00.

[7–8] At 9:00 they will study catechism until 9:30.

At 9:30 they will say the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus, followed by the rosary, and then make spiritual reading until 11:00.

At 11:00 they will make particular examen, after which they will have dinner; they will not say the *Angelus* until after dinner.

1705

[10] After dinner they will take recreation until 12:30, then say the Litany of Saint Joseph, and immediately after, they will take a walk if the weather permits; if not, they will converse together and take recreation in the house.

[12] On all holidays the bell will ring the end of recreation at 5:30; then they will make spiritual reading until 6:00.

[13] At 6:00 the bell will be rung for interior prayer, which they will make with the rest of the exercises as on days when they have school.

1718

[9] On holidays in Lent and Advent, they may go to the sermon in the morning, provided they can hear it in one of the nearest churches.

[10] After dinner they will take recreation until 12:30, then say the Litany of Saint Joseph, and immediately after, they will take a walk if the weather permits; if not, they will converse together and take recreation in the house.

[11] They may read during part of the time of recreation on holidays in books indicated by the Brother Superior, such as *The Flower of Examples*, *Father Binet*, *Travel in the Holy Land*, *The Martyrs of Japan*, and others that may recreate the Brothers.

[12] On all holidays they will end recreation at 5:30 to make spiritual reading, interior prayer, and the other exercises as on days when they have school.

1705

**[Chapter 30]<sup>39</sup>****For the First Day of School  
After Vacation**

[1] In the morning of the first day of school after vacation, they will teach only catechism, on the topic of the Christian School, and they will instruct the pupils on the dispositions they ought to have as they assist at the Mass of the Holy Spirit that will be said for them, asking God for the light and the grace they will need to benefit well from the instructions that will be given to them in school during the year. They will encourage them to be very assiduous, always to arrive before the hour, and to maintain silence and self-control. They will begin catechism exactly at 8:00 and end at 9:30; they will begin morning prayer, and when finished they will go to the church to assist at Holy Mass. They will ask the priests in the parishes where they teach school to say or have said a Mass of the Holy Spirit for the pupils or else to have one in the future. The Brothers who conduct the schools will receive Holy Communion on this day at

1718

**Chapter 30****Special Practices of the Daily  
Exercises on Certain Days of  
the Year**

[1] 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.

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39. There is no chapter in the Rule of 1705 similar to chapter 30 in the Rule of 1718. Articles from *Pratique du Règlement journalier* (see note 30, page 85) have been rearranged in the column under the Rule of 1705 to allow comparison with similar articles in the Rule of 1718.

## 1705

the Mass of the community 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. On this day in the morning and at midday in the prayers they say to begin the exercises of the school, in place of saying, "I will continue to do all my actions . . . ," they will say, "I will do, O my God, during this day and during this year, all my actions for the love of you, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**For the eve and the feast of All Saints, 1 November**

[3–4] On the eve of the feast of All Saints, they will teach catechism on the topic of the feast of All Saints for an hour, and on the day of the feast of All Saints, they will teach catechism on the topic of the feast of All Saints for the first half hour, by way of a recitation. Then for an hour they will teach catechism on the topic of the souls in purgatory. If they take the pupils to Vespers, they will also take them to Vespers of the Dead, if they are said. Then the Brothers in the house will say the Vespers of the Dead after the

## 1718

[3]<sup>40</sup> On All Saints' Day the Brothers will make spiritual reading at 4:15.

At 5:00 they will make interior prayer until 5:30, and then there will be a conference until 6:00.

[5] At 6:00 they will have supper and then take recreation until 7:30.

At 7:30 they will recite Matins of the Office of the Dead as far as Lauds.

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40. There is no article numbered 2 in the Rule of 1718; a new article was inserted in the Rule of 1726, directing that in dioceses where the feast of the Guardian Angels is celebrated on 2 or 3 October, the Communion for the first day of school will be on that day.

## 1705

Vespers of the Most Blessed Virgin, and then Compline.

**For 2 November, the day of the Commemoration of the Dead**

[6–7] On the day of the Commemoration of the Dead, they give a holiday all day. After interior prayer they chant in the oratory Matins for the Dead, with the single Collect *Fidelium*. After the Matins for the Dead, they go to hear Holy Mass, at which they receive Holy Communion and then make thanksgiving for half an hour.

[8] At 9:00 they say the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus, after which they say the rosary, then spend the rest of the day as on a Thursday that is a holiday all day.

**For the day of Saint Nicolas, 6 December**

On the day of the feast of Saint Nicolas, who is the patron saint of pupils, they give a holiday all day in place of Thursday. They must ask the priests of the parishes where they teach to say or to have said a Mass, if possible, a High Mass. At 8:00 they begin the prayer for the catechism that they give until 8:30 on the subject of the feast; then they say morning prayer and around 9:00 conduct

## 1718

**The day of the Commemoration of the Dead**

[6] After interior prayer the Brothers will recite Lauds of the Office of the Dead with the Collect *Fidelium*.

[7] They will receive Holy Communion on this day for the souls in purgatory.

[8] At 9:30 they will recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus, after which they will say the rosary, then spend the rest of the day as on Thursday when there is a holiday all day.

1705

the pupils to church. They return to the house to perform the same exercises as on Thursday when it is a holiday all day. If this feast falls on a Sunday, everything is done as on other Sundays, and they hold the feast to celebrate Saint Nicolas on the day to which the church transfers it.

**For Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, 25 December**

On each feast of a mystery of the Most Blessed Virgin, they will place in school a picture of the mystery of the feast and teach catechism on the subject of the mystery or the designated feast.

**The Birth of our Lord**

They ought to encourage the pupils to assist at midnight Mass with their parents and not separate from them.

[9] They make spiritual reading at 5:00.

[10–11] At 5:30 they make interior prayer, have supper, then prayer, after which they retire, and the bell is tolled at 7:00 instead of at 9:00.

1718

**Christmas Eve and Christmas Day**

[9] On Christmas Eve the Brothers will make their spiritual reading at 4:30.

[10] At 5:00 they will make interior prayer. At 5:30 they will make the accusation, then have supper, after which recreation, and if there is need to warm themselves, the Brothers will do so in silence.

[11] At 6:30 they will say evening prayer, after which they will go

## 1705

[12] At 10:30 they rise, and at 10:45 the subject for interior prayer is read; then they go to church and make interior prayer until High Mass, at which they assist and receive Holy Communion.

[13] When this ends, they make half an hour of thanksgiving, then return to the house, recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus, and retire.

[14] They rise at 6:00 and at 6:30 say the vocal prayer, then make interior prayer until 7:00.

[15] They go to the Mass at Daybreak, which is the second High Mass. If no second High Mass is said, they assist at a low Mass at the most convenient hour, after which they return to the house, recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus, go to the third High Mass when the bell rings, and spend the rest of the morning as on other feast days.

## 1718

to bed; the bell for retiring will be rung at 7:00.

[12] At 10:00 they will rise. At 10:30 they will go to the oratory and the subject for interior prayer will be read, immediately after which they will go to the church to be there at the beginning of Matins, and they will make interior prayer until High Mass, at which the Brothers will assist and receive Holy Communion.

[13] While Lauds are sung, the Brothers will make their thanksgiving and then return to the house, where they will recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus. They may then warm themselves in silence for a quarter of an hour when it is cold.

[14] On Christmas Day the Brothers will rise at 6:00, at 6:30 say vocal prayer, and then make interior prayer until 7:00.

[15] At 7:00 they will assist at the Mass of Daybreak, which is the second High Mass. If no second High Mass is sung, they will assist at a low Mass at the most convenient hour, after which they will return to the house and recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus.

They will go to a third High Mass when the bell rings for it and spend the rest of the morning as on other feasts.



1705

[16] On the day of Christmas they do not teach catechism, and recreation ends at 2:00, after which they say the Litany of Saint Joseph and then the rosary.

[17] During the day, they do as on other feasts,

[18] except that evening prayer is said at 7:30.

On the Saturdays after Christmas until the feast of the Purification, they do not eat meat in the community, even though it is permitted in several dioceses.

**Feast of the Circumcision, 1 January**

It is expressly forbidden for the Brothers of the Community to receive at any time or in any way whatever, on this day or on any other occasion, any gift from the pupils or other persons, not even holy pictures or any other thing that could be useful in school. Care ought to be taken on the eve of this day to forbid the pupils to offer anything.

It is also expressly forbidden to write epigrams to the pupils for this day or to allow them to write any in school. They will not, however, prevent the pupils from writing these things in their homes, but they will not speak to

1718

[16] As they do not teach catechism, recreation ends at 2:00. If they do not go to the sermon, after this they will recite the Litany of Saint Joseph and then the rosary.

[17] They will do the exercises that follow as on other feast days.

[18] At 7:30 the Brothers will recite evening prayer. At 8:00 the bell will be rung for retiring.

## 1705

them about these things or get involved in any way with this activity. These epigrams are sayings or verses written on a small paper box that one presents to relatives, by way of tribute, with a view to receiving some return gift.

**The four Ember Days and Lent**

At the beginning of school during the four Ember Day periods, they will say the usual prayers and the Litany of the Saints, both for the needs of the Church, for which the Church especially prays on these days, and for priests and other ministers of the Church who will be ordained on the Saturday. For the same intention, it is good to encourage the pupils, especially the older ones, to practice some abstinence on these days, especially on the Saturday.

## 1718

**The four Ember Days and Lent**

[1] There are four times in the year when three fast days occur in the one week, on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

[2] The first time these fasts occur every year coincides with the first week of Lent, and thus there is nothing special regarding the Brothers' observance, other than what regards the time of Lent.

[3] They fall for the second time on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday within the octave of Pentecost. The third time, they fall on the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, which is celebrated on 14 September. The fourth time occurs in the third week of Advent.

[4] The Brothers who are employed in the schools will not recite the Litany of the Saints in their houses except on the Ember Days in the month of September, which occur during vacation, because each Brother recites it in

## 1705

[5] On fast days and in Lent, as well as on feasts and all-day holidays, the bell is rung for examen at 11:30, and they take recreation until 1:15, but on Sundays the bell is rung for the examen at 11:00 as at other times, because catechism is taught after dinner.

[6] When the feast days of Saint Mathias and the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin occur during Lent, they stay with the pupils for Vespers after the High Mass. Those who say Vespers in the house say them at 11:00, at the end of interior prayer, and they end recreation at 1:00.

[7] They begin catechism at 1:30 and end it at 3:00; then they say the usual prayers and go to Compline with the pupils, unless Compline is later; in that case, around 3:30 they will say three decades of the rosary with the pupils.

## 1718

school at the beginning of school in the morning, immediately after the opening prayers in school, as indicated in *The Book of Prayers Said in the Christian Schools*.

[5] On fast days and in Lent, as well as on feasts and all-day holidays, they will make the examen at 11:30 and end recreation at 1:00, but on Sundays in Lent the bell will be rung for the examen at 11:00 as at other times of the year, because catechism is taught after dinner. The rest of the exercises will be at the same hours as on other days.

**The feast of Saint Mathias and the feast of the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin**

[6] When these feasts occur during Lent, the Brothers who teach school will stay for Vespers after the High Mass, and they will end recreation at 1:00.

[7] They will begin catechism at 1:30 and end it at 3:00; then they will say the usual prayers, after which they will take the pupils to Compline, unless it is said later than around 3:30; if it is said later, they will say three decades of the rosary with the pupils.

## 1705

[8] When the Brothers have the pupils with religious who do not say Compline until the evening, if they do not do so there, they say Compline of the Most Blessed Virgin in the house at 4:00.

[9] They do the rest of the exercises as on other feast days.

On all fast days, the bell is rung for spiritual reading at 5:15, for interior prayer at 6:15, and for supper at 6:45, but the bell is rung for the end of recreation at 8:00. There is a need to encourage the pupils to abstain from something some day each week of Lent and on the vigils of the principal feasts of the year, as on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week and on the vigils of Pentecost, the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin, All Saints, and Christmas.

**For Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday before Lent**

They teach catechism on Sunday and have school the following two days, both morning and afternoon; no pupil is excused for any reason whatever. They ought to be told this the preceding Saturday at the end of the afternoon.

## 1718

[8] In schools where the Brothers take the pupils to Vespers with religious who do not say Compline until the evening or near the evening, the Brothers who have not assisted at Compline with their pupils will recite Compline of the Most Blessed Virgin in the house.

[9] They will do the rest of the exercises for these days as on other feast days.

1705

If the Most Blessed Sacrament is on exposition in a nearby church or in the parish where schools are conducted and are not too far away, they send every half hour during school a pupil from each class to each church to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament.

**For Ash Wednesday**

On Ash Wednesday they assemble the pupils in school at the usual hour and teach catechism from 8:00 until 9:00 on the ceremony of the ashes and how they ought to receive them. At 9:00 they say the prayers, and if there is still time between the prayers and Holy Mass, they teach the pupils by practice what they ought to observe and how they ought to approach the altar and receive the ashes. If there is no intervening time, they take the last quarter hour of the catechism, then go to Holy Mass, and after Holy Mass dismiss them. If all the pupils have not received ashes, they will ask some priests to impose ashes on them; they give a holiday for the rest of the day.

**For the feast of the Great Saint Joseph**

On the feast of Saint Joseph, the Patron and the Protector of the Community, they have a Holy

1718

**The feast of the Great Saint Joseph**

## 1705

Mass said for the Community, at which they receive Holy Communion.

[10] After interior prayer they have public reading in the New Testament, then recitation and explanation until 7:30; then they read in the fourth book of *The Imitation* to dispose themselves for Holy Communion, after which they say the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus.

[11] On such occasions, when they can leave at 8:00 to go to Holy Mass where it is said at that hour and at a church that is convenient, they return to the house to study catechism and have recitation, if time allows, until 10:00.

[12] At 10:00 the bell is rung for spiritual reading and at 10:30 for interior prayer, and at 11:00,

[13] if it is Lent, they say Vespers; if it is after Easter, they make the examen. When the feast occurs during Lent, they recite Vespers of the Most Blessed Virgin at 11:00.

[14] They take recreation after dinner until 3:00;

## 1718

[10] On the feast of Saint Joseph, Patron and Protector of the Community, after interior prayer there will be public reading in the New Testament, then recitation and explanation until 7:30; then the Brothers will read a chapter from the fourth book of *The Imitation of Christ* to dispose themselves for Holy Communion, after which they will say the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus.

[11] They will go to assist at Holy Mass at the most convenient hour, and they will have a Mass said for the Community at which the Brothers will receive Holy Communion; on their return to the house, they will study and recite catechism.

[12] If time remains before 10:00, they will make spiritual reading, and at 10:30 they will make interior prayer.

[13] When this feast occurs during Lent, they will recite Vespers of the Most Blessed Virgin at 11:00; if it occurs after Easter, they will make the examen at 11:00.

[14] During Lent they will take recreation after dinner until 3:00.

## 1705

[15] they say the Litany of Saint Joseph and then the rosary, after which they read in the New Testament, each one by himself.

[16] At 4:00 they say Compline of the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin.

[17] After Compline they take recreation until 4:45, then make spiritual reading and the rest as on other feasts.

**For Holy Week**

On Holy Wednesday they teach catechism from 1:00 to 3:00, as on Sundays, on how they ought to spend the three following days. At 3:00 they say the prayers and then dismiss the pupils.

[1] These three days until Saturday inclusively, they say the Office of the Church. At 4:00 they say the Office of *Tenebrae*, which on this day usually lasts until 6:30. If it ends earlier, they make spiritual reading after the Office.

[2] At 6:45 the bell is rung for interior prayer.

## 1718

[15] At 3:00 they will say the Litany of Saint Joseph and then the rosary, after which they will read in the New Testament, each one by himself.

[16] At 4:00 they will say Compline of the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin.

[17] After Compline they will take recreation until 4:45, then make spiritual reading, and for the rest of the day do as on other feast days, and after dinner they will do as on holiday feasts, when they stay in the house.

**The last three days of Holy Week**

[1] From Holy Wednesday to Saturday inclusively, they will say the Office of the Church. On Holy Wednesday at 4:00, they will say the Office of *Tenebrae*, which on this day usually lasts until 6:30. If it ends earlier, they will make spiritual reading after the Office.

[2] At 6:30 they will make interior prayer.

## 1705

[3] They have supper at 7:15 and recreation until 8:30.

[4] Before supper on Wednesday, they say *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem*. On Holy Thursday and Good Friday they do not say grace before meals, either in the morning or in the evening, but only *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem*, followed by the entire *Pater noster* in a low voice; then the Brother Director strikes his hands, which is the sign to be seated at table.

[5] *Jube, Domne* is not said, nor at the end of the reading, *Tu autem*.

[6] For grace after meals, they say the same *Christus*, then *Pater noster* in a low voice. Then while going to the oratory, they say the *Miserere* alternatively, at the end of which the Brother Director, without saying *Oremus*, says the Collect *Respice*. Then he begins the Litany of the Passion, “Jesus, poor and abject,” and so forth.

[7] On the day of Holy Thursday, after morning interior prayer at 6:00, they recite Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None, which ends at 7:00.

## 1718

[3] At 7:00 they will make the accusation, followed by supper, and then recreation until 8:30.

[4] On Wednesday at supper and on Holy Thursday and Good Friday at both meals, they will not say grace before meals but only *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem*, followed by the entire *Pater noster* in a low voice; then the Brother Director will strike his hands, which will be a signal to be seated at table.

[5] They will not say *Jube, Domne*, nor at the end of the reading, *Tu autem*.

[6] For grace after meals, they will say the same *Christus*, followed by the entire *Pater noster* in a low voice; then while going to the oratory, they will say the *Miserere* alternatively, at the end of which the Brother Director, without saying *Oremus*, will say the Collect *Respice* and then begin the Litany of the Passion, “Jesus, poor and abject,” and so forth.

[7] On Holy Thursday at 6:00 in the morning, immediately after interior prayer they will recite Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None, which will end at 7:00.



1705

[8] They have public reading of the New Testament with recitation and explanation.

[9] At 8:00 they hear Holy Mass, at which they receive Holy Communion and after which they make thanksgiving for half an hour.

[10] After thanksgiving they make spiritual reading at 9:30.

[11] At 10:30 they make interior prayer until 11:15; at 11:15 they say Vespers.

[12] At 11:45 they make the examen, then have dinner.

[13] On these two days they do not read the usual books at table but only the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the four Evangelists; when that has been completed, they read Bible history, beginning with the Last Supper of our Lord.

[14] At noon on Thursday they read the Passion according to Saint Matthew *[continued in 16]*,

1718

[8] At 7:00 there will be public reading of the New Testament, followed by recitation and explanation.

[9] At 8:00 the Brothers will assist at Holy Mass, at which they will receive Holy Communion and then make thanksgiving for half an hour.

[10] On their return from Holy Mass, they will make spiritual reading.

[11] At 10:30 they will make interior prayer until 11:00; at 11:00 they will say Vespers.

[12] At 11:30 they will make the examen and then have dinner.

[13] On these two days they do not read the usual books at table but only the Passion of our Lord according to the four Evangelists; when that has been completed, they read Bible history, beginning with the Last Supper of our Lord.

[14] At noon on Thursday they will read the Passion according to Saint Matthew, which is recorded in chapters 26 and 27; the reading will begin by saying, "The Passion of our Lord according to Saint Matthew," and they will do the same at the other meals, without naming the chapters.

## 1705

[15] On Thursday at supper and on Friday at both meals, they add *mortem autem crucis* to the verse *Christus*.

[16] . . . and in the evening at supper, the Passion according to Saint Mark is read; then, as in the morning, only Bible history is read, beginning where they left off at noon.

[17] On Friday at noon they read the Passion according to Saint Luke, and in the evening, according to Saint John, and they continue to read Bible history, including up to the burial of our Lord.

[18] On these two days there is no recreation, neither at noon nor in the evening, and they keep very strict silence all day.

[19] On Thursday, after dinner, starting at 12:45 they read publicly chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 in the New Testament, the Gospel of Saint John. Then the Brother Director gives a conference, which continues until 2:00, on the union that the Brothers ought to have and to maintain among themselves.

[20–21] At 2:00, the Brothers ask pardon of one another, each one individually, for the trouble they

## 1718

[15] On Thursday at supper and on Friday at both meals, they will add *mortem autem crucis* to the verse *Christus*.

[16] At supper on Holy Thursday, they will read the Passion according to Saint Mark; then, as at dinner, they will read only Bible history, beginning where they left off.

[17] On Friday during dinner they will read the Passion according to Saint Luke, and at supper, according to Saint John, and they will continue to read Bible history, up to the burial of our Lord.

[18] On these two days they will not say the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus and of Saint Joseph; there will be no recreation, neither at noon nor in the evening, and they will keep very strict silence all day.

[19] On Thursday, immediately after dinner, they will read publicly chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 of the Gospel of Saint John. Then the Brother Director will give a conference, which will continue until 2:00, on the union that the Brothers ought to have and to maintain among themselves.

[20–21] At 2:00, the Brothers will ask pardon of one another, each one individually (the Brother

## 1705

have caused their Brothers and the bad example they have given them, in these words, “My very dear Brother, I most humbly beg your pardon for all the trouble I have given you and all the bad example I have given you since I have had the happiness of living with you in the Community. I beg you to ask God that he do me the favor of pardoning me for these offenses, and I beg you also to have the goodness to pardon me for these offenses.”

[22] When asking pardon of the Brother Director, in place of saying “all the bad example,” they say, “all the disobediences I have committed in your regard.”

After this ceremony they say Compline; if enough time remains before 3:15, they make interior prayer until 3:15.

[23] At the end of interior prayer they say *Tenebrae*, after which they make spiritual reading.

[24] At 6:00 they ring for interior prayer; at 6:30 they have supper; then after the Litany of the Passion of our Lord, they say the rosary; at the end of each decade, instead of saying *Gloria Patri*, they say *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis*.

## 1718

Director will be the first), for the trouble they have caused their Brothers and the bad example they have given them, in these words, “My very dear Brother, I most humbly beg your pardon for all the trouble I have given you and all the bad example I have given you since I have had the happiness of living with you in the Community. I beg you to ask God that he do me the favor of pardoning me for these offenses, and I beg you also to have the goodness to pardon me for these offenses.”

[22] When asking pardon of the Brother Director, in place of saying “all the bad example,” they will say, “all the disobediences I have committed in your regard.”

After this exercise they will say Compline; if enough time remains before 3:30, they will make interior prayer until that hour.

[23] At 3:30 they will say *Tenebrae*, after which they will make spiritual reading.

[24] At 6:00 they will make interior prayer. At 6:30 they will make the accusation, then have supper. After the Litany of the Passion of our Lord, they will say the rosary; at the end of each decade, instead of *Gloria Patri*, those on one side will say *Christus factus est pro nobis obediens usque ad*

## 1705

[25] After the rosary, if the house is near a church, they go there to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar until toward 8:30; otherwise, they fulfill this duty in the house.

[26] At 8:30 they say evening prayer as usual.

[27] On Good Friday, after morning interior prayer, they recite Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None; then if the house is near a church, they go to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament; otherwise, they fulfill this duty in the house.

[28] At 8:00, if there is a sermon in the church where they go to hear Holy Mass, they go there to hear it. They go earlier if it begins earlier; otherwise, they read in public the Passion of our Lord according to Saint John; when this is completed, the Brother Director gives a conference on the subject of the Passion of our Lord; then if any time remains before the service, they make spiritual reading.

[29] At 9:00 they go to church to assist at the service. On their return they say the hymn *Vexilla Regis prodeunt* and repeat three

## 1718

*mortem*, and those on the other side, *Mortem autem crucis*.

[25] After the rosary, if the house is near a church, they will go there to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar until toward 8:30; otherwise, they will fulfill this duty in the house.

[26] At 8:30 they will say evening prayer as usual.

[27] On Good Friday, after morning interior prayer, they will recite Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None; then if the house is near a church, they will go to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament; otherwise, they will fulfill this duty in the house.

[28] At 8:00, if there is a sermon in the church where they go to hear Holy Mass, they will go there to hear it. They will go earlier if it begins earlier; otherwise, they will read in public the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Saint John, after which the Brother Director will give a conference on the subject of the Passion of our Lord; then if any time remains before the service, they will make spiritual reading.

[29] At 9:00 they will go to church to assist at the service. On their return they will say the hymn *Vexilla Regis prodeunt* and repeat

## 1705

times *O Crux, ave spes unica*; then all the Brothers, in recollection and in a spirit of adoration, go one after the other to adore the holy cross of our Lord placed on a cloth on the altar step in the oratory. If they have adored the cross in church, they do not perform this exercise in the house. After the adoration they say Vespers; when that is completed, they make the examen and have dinner.

[30] On Good Friday at supper, they are given a portion of peas only, and they are given no fruit.

[31–32] After dinner they go to the common room and have the advertisement of defects for the whole year; then they say the rosary. If any time remains before 2:30, they make interior prayer.

[33] At 3:00 they say Compline; when finished, they read a little in *The Imitation*.

[34] At 3:30 they say the Office of *Tenebrae*; when finished, if any time remains before 6:00, they make spiritual reading. At 6:00 they make interior prayer.

## 1718

three times *O Crux, ave spes unica*; then all the Brothers, in recollection and in a spirit of adoration, will go one after the other to adore the holy cross of our Lord placed on a cloth on the altar step in the oratory. If they have adored the cross in church, they will not perform this exercise in the house. After the adoration they will say Vespers; when that is completed, they will make the examen and have dinner.

[30] On Good Friday at supper, they will be given a portion of peas only, and they will be given no fruit.

[31–32] After dinner they will go to the common room, where they will have the advertisement of defects for the whole year; then they will say the rosary. If any time remains before 2:30, they will read in the New Testament, each one by himself.

[33] At 3:00 they will say Compline; when finished, they will read a little in *The Imitation*.

[34] At 3:30 they will say the Office of *Tenebrae*; when finished, if any time remains before 6:00, they will make spiritual reading. At 6:00 they will make interior prayer.

## 1705

[35] At 6:30 they have supper, after which they go to the common room, and until 8:00 they read the explanation of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Saint John.

[36] At 8:00 they go to the oratory, where they say the Seven Penitential Psalms; when finished, they say on their knees the Litany of the Saints with the versicles and prayers that follow. If any time remains before 8:30, they remain in recollection in the oratory.

[37] At 8:30 they say the evening prayer as usual.

[38] On Holy Saturday, after morning interior prayer, they recite Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None.

[39] At 7:00 there is public reading of the New Testament and then recitation and explanation.

[40] At 8:00 they make spiritual reading.

[41] At 8:45 they make interior prayer until 9:30; at 9:30 they say the rosary and then go to hear Holy Mass at which they receive Holy Communion and make

## 1718

[35] At 6:30 they will make the accusation, followed by supper, after which they will go to the common room, where they will read the explanation of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Saint John, along with recitation and conference, until 8:00.

[36] At 8:00 they will go to the oratory, where they will say the Seven Penitential Psalms; when finished, they will say on their knees the Litany of the Saints with the versicles and prayers that follow. If any time remains before 8:30, they will remain in recollection in the oratory.

[37] At 8:30 they will say the evening prayer as usual.

[38] On Holy Saturday, after morning interior prayer, they will recite Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None.

[39] At 7:00 there will be public reading of the New Testament and then recitation and explanation.

[40] At 8:00 they will make spiritual reading until 8:45.

[41] At 8:45 they will say the rosary, then go to hear Holy Mass at which they will receive Holy Communion and make thanksgiving for half an hour. If any

## 1705

thanksgiving for half an hour, after which, if any time remains before 11:45, they read in *The Imitation* until 11:45.

[42] The bell is rung for examen; then they have dinner.

[43] At 1:00 they say the Litany of Saint Joseph, after which they take recreation in the house and spend the rest of the day as on holidays.

[44] During these three days, what cannot be done because of Holy Mass and thanksgiving. . . .<sup>41</sup>

**For the eve and the day of Easter and the feasts that follow**

In the afternoon of Wednesday of Holy Week and of the eve of Pentecost, the Most Holy Trinity, and Christmas, the pupils are assembled as usual, and catechism is taught from 1:30 to 3:00 as is done on Sundays and feasts.

On the day of Easter and of Pentecost, they do not teach catechism; they do so, however, on the two feasts that follow.

[1] On the day of Easter and of Pentecost, they do the exercises as on Sundays, when they remain

## 1718

time remains, they will read in *The Imitation of Our Lord Jesus Christ*.

[42] At 11:30 they will make the examen and then have dinner.

[43] At 1:00 they will say the Litany of Saint Joseph, after which they will take recreation in the house and spend the rest of the day as on holidays.

[44] During these three days, what cannot be done before Holy Mass will be done after.

**Easter**

[1] On the day of Easter, of Pentecost, and of Christmas, they will do the exercises as on Sundays

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41. The sentence ends at this point in the manuscript of *Pratique du Règlement journalier*. What is missing can be inferred from the corresponding article in the Rule of 1718.

**1705**

in the house, and after dinner they do as on the day of Christmas.

**The feast of Saint Mark and Rogation Days**

On the eve of Saint Mark and on the Sunday before Rogation Days, they teach catechism on the processions that are carried out on these days in the church, and on that Sunday they also teach catechism on the same processions.

On the day of Saint Mark and on Rogation Days, they remain in school and do not assist at the processions; they also ought to forbid the students to assist at them. They ought, however, to encourage the students, when they are older, to assist at these processions, and tell them what the Church's intention is and encourage those who cannot assist at them for some legitimate reason to recite the Litany of the Saints on each of these four days. This is why they recite the litany in school in the morning, after the prayer said at the beginning of school.

**For the eve and the day of the Most Holy Trinity**

[5] On the eve of the Most Holy Trinity, they teach catechism from 1:30 to 3:00, as on Sundays. At 3:00 they say the prayers and then dismiss the pupils. They make

**1718**

and feasts, when they remain in the house.

**The eve and the day of the feast of the Most Holy Trinity**

[5] On the eve of the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity, they will make spiritual reading from 4:45 until 6:00; then the Brother Director will give a conference; if not,



1705

spiritual reading from 4:30 to 5:15 and interior prayer until 6:00.

[6] They then have a conference on how they ought to dispose themselves to spend this feast in the spirit of the Community.

[7] In the morning on the day of the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, they ought to have a Mass said for the Community at a convenient hour near 8:00, at which all ought to receive Holy Communion.

[8] After Holy Mass they renew their vows as usual; outside of this, the exercises are done as on Saint Joseph's Day.

On this day they do not assist at the High Masses in the parishes, and they do not teach catechism in the afternoon.

**For the feast of the Most Blessed Sacrament and during the octave**

[9] The Brothers will go every day before the Most Blessed Sacrament to adore it at a time that will be most convenient, selected by the Director, who will take advice on this from the Superior General of the Community.

1718

there will be a reading in Rodríguez on the vows.

[7] On the day of the feast of the Most Holy Trinity, at the most convenient hour in the morning, they will have a Mass said for the Community at which all will receive Holy Communion.

[8] After thanksgiving the Brothers, having returned to the house, will renew their vows as usual; with this exception the exercises will be the same as on Saint Joseph's Day.

**On the day of the feast of Corpus Christi and during the octave**

[9] The Brothers will go every day to the church at the most convenient time to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament all together for a full quarter of an hour.

[10] During the whole octave, the Brothers will assist at Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and for this purpose omit the evening interior prayer. They will

## 1705

[11] In the parish or in the church where they usually go to Holy Mass, if Benediction takes place during the octave at an hour when they can go without leaving school, spiritual reading, or interior prayer, they will assist at it; if Benediction does not last half an hour, the Brothers will stay in the church for the rest of the half hour. The pupils will go before the Most Blessed Sacrament during the whole octave, as has been said for the days that precede Ash Wednesday.

**For feasts of local patrons or of parishes, if there are several**

On the feast day of the patron of a parish where they conduct schools, if it is not a civil feast, they give a holiday to all the pupils of all the schools instead of on Thursday, and they do as on Thursday.

If there is only one parish in a place where the feast of the patron of the parish is and where the Brothers live and if it is a civil holiday in that parish, they do as on feast days; if the feast is of a patron of some other parish in which there is no school but

## 1718

be careful to be in church among the first and not to leave until after everyone else has gone, so that they will be there at least half an hour.

1705

there are pupils from that parish who come to the schools, they give holiday to the pupils of that parish only.

**For the feast of patrons of trades**

On the day of the feast of the patron of some trade, they give a holiday in the morning only to the pupils whose parents are in that trade. They do not give a holiday to the pupils on the feast day of a saint whose name they have, nor on feast days of confraternities.

**For the last day of school before vacation**

On the last day of school before vacation, they teach catechism from 1:30 to 3:00 on how the pupils ought to spend the time of vacation. Then the teachers give rewards to the pupils in accord with their piety and assiduity. They sell paper to the writers, and they give the models for practicing writing during vacation. Before this day the names of all the pupils ought to be written in the Register that lists their age, their character, their conduct, the grade they are in, and the time they have been there. The pupils ought to be told the day when school will reopen, to be there without fail in the morning on that day to assist at the Mass of the Holy Spirit that will

1718

1705

be said for them, and that those who fail to attend will remain in the grade where they are and not go to a higher grade.

1718

### **Rule of 1718**

#### **Feasts that are not civil holidays**

[12] On the feast of the mysteries of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Most Blessed Virgin, and on others that are not civil holidays, such as the feast of the Transfiguration, of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and of the Presentation and of the Visitation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, they will give a holiday all day instead of Thursday. The Brothers will receive Holy Communion and do the other exercises in the morning as on feast days; they will, however, say the rosary in the morning, and in the afternoon they will do as on ordinary holidays, except on the feast of the great Saint Joseph, which will be kept as a feast all day.

[13] They will postpone the feast of Saint Cassian to the following Thursday and give holiday all day, and on this day in the morning they will do as on feasts that are not civil holidays.

[14] They may go to hear the sermon on feasts that are not civil holidays and also on feasts that are civil holidays and when they do not teach catechism, as on Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, provided they are able to hear it in one of the nearest churches.

1705

1718

[Chapter 31]<sup>42</sup>

Chapter 31

Regulations for Vacation Time

Daily Regulations for Vacation Time

Daily regulation for holidays during vacation

For days that are holidays

[1] During vacation there will be holidays three times a week: Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. If a feast falls on one of these three days, the holidays will be on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the regulation for each of these three days will be the same as for ordinary holidays.

[1] During vacation there will be holidays three times a week: Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. If a feast falls on one of these three days, the holidays will be on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and the regulation for each of these three days will be the same as for ordinary holidays.

For days that are not holidays

For days that are not holidays

[2] At 6:00 they will assist at Holy Mass; then each will read by himself in the New Testament.

[2] At 6:00 they will assist at Holy Mass; then each will read by himself in the New Testament.

[3] At 7:30 they will have breakfast and then recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus; then they will take recreation until 8:30. At 8:30 they will study catechism; at 9:00 they will recite the catechism.

[3] At 7:15 they will have breakfast and then recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus; then they will take recreation until 8:15. At 8:15 they will study catechism until 8:45, then recite until 9:00.

At 9:15 they will write; they may take the first quarter hour of writing, both morning and afternoon, to practice arithmetic, and those who have not learned how to read perfectly will study reading during the time for writing.

At 9:00 they will write; they may take the first quarter hour of writing, both morning and afternoon, to practice arithmetic, and the new Brothers who have not learned how to read perfectly will study reading during the time for writing.

42. This chapter is in the Rule of 1705.

1705

[4] At the 10:00 bell they will make spiritual reading.

[5] At the 10:30 bell they will make interior prayer.

[6] At 11:00 they will make the particular examen,

[7] and after dinner they will take recreation until 1:00. At 1:00 they will recite the Litany of Saint Joseph and then the rosary. After the rosary they will work, if there is anything to be done.

[8] At 2:30 they will have a reading of the *Rules for School* and then a conference on the topic. At 3:30 they will take recreation; at 4:00 they will study catechism; at 4:30 they will recite the catechism; at 4:45 they will write.

[9] At the 5:30 bell they will make spiritual reading. At the 6:00 bell they will make interior prayer.

[10]. The evening recreation will end at 8:30 every day during vacation.

1718

[4] At 10:00 they will make spiritual reading until 10:45.

[5] At 10:45 they will make interior prayer.

[6] At 11:00 each day of the vacation, they will make the particular examen and then have dinner.

[7] After dinner they will take recreation until 1:00. At 1:00 they will recite the Litany of Saint Joseph and then the rosary. After the rosary they will work, if there is anything to be done.

[8] At 3:00 they will take recreation until 3:30. At 3:30 they will study catechism until 4:00; at 4:00 they will recite catechism until 4:15; at 4:15 they will write.

[9] At 5:30 they will make spiritual reading. At 6:00 they will make interior prayer.

[10] The evening recreation will end at 8:00 every day during vacation. At 8:00 they will say evening prayer, and they will go to bed at 8:30.

## 1705

## [Chapter 32]

**Rule for the Time of the  
Common Retreat During  
Vacation**

[11] At 6:00 they will assist at Holy Mass, and then there will be recitation on interior prayer, followed by a discussion or a conference.<sup>43</sup>

[12] At 7:30 they will have breakfast and then recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus.

[13] At 8:00 there will be a public reading of a chapter of the Gospel, one chapter each day; those read will be chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Saint Matthew and chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 of Saint John.

[14] At 8:30 they will say the rosary and then make spiritual reading.

[15] At 10:15 they will make interior prayer.

[16] At 11:00 they will make the particular examen.

## 1718

## Chapter 32

**Rule for the Time of the  
Common Retreat During  
Vacation**

[11] At 6:00 they will assist at Holy Mass, and then there will be a discussion or a conference,<sup>43</sup> or a public reading in some good book in the form of a discussion.

[12] At 7:15 they will have breakfast and then recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus.

[13] At 8:00 there will be a public reading of a chapter of the Gospel, one chapter each day; those read will be chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Saint Matthew and chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 of Saint John.

[14] At 8:30 they will say the rosary and then make spiritual reading.

[15] At 10:15 they will make interior prayer.

[16] At 11:00 they will make the particular examen.

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43. The French words *conférence* and *entretien* are used together twice in this chapter (here and in article 20). Where the two words are used together, the meaning of the French *conférence* is evidently discussion. De La Salle encouraged the Brothers from the beginning to share their thoughts about topics and issues in the Community. Also, in this chapter the word *conférence* is clearly used in article 17 to mean discussion.

## 1705

[17] After dinner they will take recreation until 1:00. At 1:00 they will recite the Litany of Saint Joseph, and then there will be a public reading of Rodríguez on observance of the Rule.

At 2:00 there will be a public reading of a chapter of the Rule and then a conference on the little exactitude that one can have in observing some points of what has been read.

[18] At the 2:30 bell they will make interior prayer. At 3:00 they will say the rosary and then make particular examen on their conduct regarding school as well as on their interior life.

[19] At 4:00 they will make spiritual reading.

[20] At 5:00 they will make interior prayer. At 6:00 they will have a recitation on interior prayer, then a discussion or conference. They will spend the rest of the day as on other days.

[21] In the afternoon the interior prayer will be on their work in school.

## 1718

[17] After dinner they will take recreation until 1:00. At 1:00 they will recite the Litany of Saint Joseph, and then there will be a public reading of Rodríguez on observance of the Rule, obedience, manifestation of conscience, and fraternal correction, and a discussion on these topics.

[18] At 2:00 they will make interior prayer until 2:30 and then have public reading of the Rule until 3:00. At 3:00 they will say the rosary, and then each one by himself will examine himself on his interior life; this will be done, as in the morning, in a room or in the garden, each one by himself in silence and recollection.

[19] At 4:00 they will make spiritual reading until 5:00. At 5:00 they may review their resolutions for a quarter of an hour.

[20] At 5:15 they will make interior prayer. At 6:00 they will have a recitation on interior prayer, then a discussion or conference. They will spend the rest of the day as on other days.

[21] In the afternoon the interior prayer will be on their work in school.



1705

**Renewal of Vows for School Brothers<sup>44</sup>**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, prostrate in profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, 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, N., 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, in any place I may be sent or to do in the said Society what I will be assigned either by the body of this Society or by the Superiors who have or will have the government thereof; this is why I renew the vows that I have made of obedience to the body of this Society as well as to the Superiors, which vows of association and stability in the said Society and of obedience I promise to keep inviolably during all my life, in faith of which I have signed in the house of . . . this feast of the Most Holy Trinity, the . . . of the month of . . . seventeen hundred and . . .

1718

**Renewal of Vows for Serving Brothers<sup>44</sup>**

In the name of the Father. . . . Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, prostrate in most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, 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, N., 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 together, in any place I may be sent to do in the said Society what I will be assigned either by the body of this Society or by the Superiors who have or will have the government thereof; this is why I promise and vow obedience to the body of this Society as also to the Superiors, which vows of association and of stability in the said Society and of obedience I promise to keep inviolably during all my life, in faith of which I have signed in the house of . . . this feast of the Most Holy Trinity, the . . . day of the month of . . . seventeen hundred and . . .

[This is the end of the Rule of 1718.]<sup>45</sup>

44. The Rule of 1705 has the vow formula for school Brothers; the Rule of 1718, for serving Brothers. The formula for the serving Brothers does not include the vow “to conduct together and by association gratuitous schools.”

## Rule of 1705

### Daily Exercises for the House of the Novitiate

[1] They will rise at 4:30.

[2] At 5:00 they will make a short quarter hour of vocal prayers and then interior prayer until 6:00.

[3] At 6:00 they will recite Matins and Lauds of the Office of the Blessed Virgin.

[4] Beginning around 7:00, the novices will learn by heart, while they walk in the garden or in a room, what their Director has given them to learn from the New Testament, and then they will recite it to the Director of Novices.

[5] At 8:00 they will recite the Litany of the Holy Infant Jesus and then Prime and Tierce of the Office of the Blessed Virgin.

[6] At 8:30 they will assist at Holy Mass, at which one or several novices will receive Holy Communion for the needs of the Community, each one on a day of the week that will be assigned to him.

[7] At the end of the Holy Mass they will have breakfast.

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45. The sole manuscript of the Rule of 1718 extant has the following paragraph at the end; it is translated here with the same minimal punctuation as in *Cahiers lasalliens* 25, 146:

“We the undersigned Superior of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools are sending to you my very dear Brothers of the city of Troyes the above written rules containing thirty-two chapters with the formula for the renewal of vows signed by us in accordance with what was determined and arranged both by us and by the Brothers Directors of our said society in our assembly held in our house of the Saint Yon suburb of Rouen in the month of May of the year seventeen hundred and seventeen to be put in practice and observed by our said Brothers, in consequence of which we declare null all other rules that can be found in one or other of our houses in faith of which we have signed in our house of Saint Yon this thirty-first of October seventeen hundred and eighteen. Joseph Truffet called Brother Barthélemy.”

## Rule of 1705

[8] Then they will recite Sext and make spiritual reading, each one by himself in the common room, until the 10:30 bell.

[9] At the 10:30 bell they will make interior prayer until 11:00.

[10] At 11:00 the Director of Novices will have several recite on the topic of interior prayer, and then he will give a conference on the topic of interior prayer, certain virtues that are most needed by novices, the practice of the Rule, or the work of the Institute.

[11] At 11:30 they will make particular examen, followed by the accusation of faults; then they will have dinner.

[12] After dinner they will take recreation until 1:00.

[13] At 1:00 they will say the Litany of Saint Joseph and then the rosary.

[14] From the rosary until 3:00 they will read in some book to learn Latin or French, or in letters written by hand, or they will work either in the garden or in sweeping and cleaning rooms in the house, according to what has been assigned by the Director of Novices.

[15] At 3:00 they will recite None, Vespers, and Compline of the Office of the Most Blessed Virgin.

[16] From Vespers until 4:30 they will study catechism.

[17] At 4:30 they will have the recitation and explanation of the catechism that they have studied.

[18] At 5:00 they will make spiritual reading, each one by himself, until 5:45.

[19] At 5:45 they will tell one another what they remember from their spiritual reading and be instructed on how they ought to make spiritual reading and on the benefits they can draw from it.

[20] At 6:00 the bell will be rung for spiritual reading, which they will make until 6:30.

### **Rule of 1705**

[21] At 6:30 they will make the accusation, after which they will have supper, and after supper they will take recreation until 8:00.

[22] At 8:00 a novice will give a practice lesson in catechism or in a school subject to learn how to do these tasks well.

[23] At 8:30 they will have evening prayer, after which they will leave to retire.

[24] At 9:00 the bell will be tolled for retiring, and all will then retire to the dormitory and be in bed by 9:15.

## Rule of 1705

### Special Exercises for Sundays and Feasts [for the House of the Novitiate]

[1] In the morning up to Mass they will do the same as on other days.

[2] At Holy Mass all will receive Holy Communion and make thanksgiving for half an hour.

[3] After the thanksgiving they will make spiritual reading.

[4] At 11:00 the bell will be rung for interior prayer, which they will make until 11:30.

[5] Then they will do the same as on other days, up to the end of the rosary.

[6] At the end of the rosary they will have the advertisement of defects up to 3:00.

[7] At 3:00 they will ring the first Vespers bell and recite the Office of None.

[8] At 3:15 they will ring the second Vespers bell and remain in recollection until 3:30.

[9] At 3:30 they will ring the third Vespers bell, after which they will begin Vespers.

[10] At the end of Vespers they will take recreation until 4:30.

[11] At 4:30 they will make spiritual reading until 5:15.

[12] At 5:15 they will make interior prayer until 6:00.

[13] At 6:00 the Superior or the Director of Novices will give a conference on the topic of interior prayer, some points of the Rule, or the work of the Institute.

[14] At 6:30 they will make the accusation, and they will spend the rest of the day as on other days.

## Rule of 1705

### Special Exercises on Holidays for the House of the Novitiate

[1] The Brothers of the Society will receive Holy Communion at Holy Mass and then make thanksgiving for half an hour.

[2] After thanksgiving they will have breakfast and then make spiritual reading.

[3] At 10:30 the bell will be rung for interior prayer, which they will make until 11:00.

[4] At 11:00 they will recite the rosary.

[5] At 11:45 they will make the particular examen, then have dinner and recreation until 1:15.

[6] At 1:15 they will recite the Litany of Saint Joseph and then None, Vespers, and Compline of the Office of the Blessed Virgin.

[7] The Brothers of the Society will go for a walk after the litany, and after Vespers the novices will take recreation in the house under the guidance of their Director.

[8] At 5:30 the bell will be rung for spiritual reading, and they will spend the rest of the day as on other days.

[This is the end of the Rule of 1705.]

# Memorandum on the Habit

Translated, edited, and introduced  
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# Introduction

## The translation of the document

*Le Mémoire sur l'Habit* was translated into English and published almost fifty years ago by the pioneer Institute historian W. J. Battersby.<sup>1</sup> His translation is rather literal but also quite able. I have made use of it when appropriate, although I have followed the French transcription made by Maurice Hermans for the *Cahiers lasalliens*,<sup>2</sup> which differs in places from the one from which Battersby apparently worked and is more accurate. In general, this present translation is different than Battersby's in one important respect: I attempt to offer here a modern (and therefore freer) rendering of the original document. I believe there are sound reasons for this divergence.

First, the extant manuscript is a rough draft of a position paper whose final form we can only guess at. It is not titled, signed, or even dated. Words, phrases, and lines are crossed out in places, and new ones inserted. Sentences collide with one another without separation by standardized punctuation, which was nonexistent in seventeenth-century France. Some passages are verbose; others seem to leave out important connecting words or phrases. Given what the translator must work with, it seems appropriate that on occasion and with care he would add words and phrases, condense some passages, and rearrange certain sentences, as I have done.

Second, the manuscript contains expressions not commonly used today. Indeed, its title—*Mémoire sur l'Habit*—can be misleading. For many American readers, the term *memoir* suggests a collection of personal recollections or reminiscences.<sup>3</sup> This is certainly not what we

1. See *De La Salle: Letters and Documents*, 239–57. Battersby wrote mainly for an audience in the United Kingdom.

2. See “*Le Mémoire sur l'Habit*,” in *Cahiers lasalliens* 5, 286–301; also *Œuvres complètes*, 51–58.

3. According to Merriam Webster, *memoir* means “(1) an official note or report: MEMORANDUM; 2) a narrative composed from personal experience.”

are dealing with here. This so-called memoir is a memorandum or a position paper, that is to say, an in-depth, authoritative report (almost a legal brief) presenting an argument or position. Throughout this translation I have tried to use modern expressions that are readily understood because they are commonly used. Hence, the English title of the document is *memorandum* rather than *memoir*.

Third, the manuscript contains some expressions particular to religious congregations that can be misleading if translated literally. For example, the word *regularity* in the manuscript is meant to connote faithfulness in keeping rules and following religious observances. However, for many English speakers, it carries quite a different meaning. I have, therefore, attempted to make the vocabulary of the religious life intelligible to modern readers by employing words and phrases that readers in general can understand.

Fourth, De La Salle sometimes employs grandiose expressions that do not translate easily into modern English. Whether this is a reflection of the conventions of the day, the nuances of the French language, or his personal taste is not easy to determine. However, it is clear that today's teachers would not feel comfortable claiming that their students are taught to read and write "perfectly." I have decided, therefore, to use less pretentious phrases emphasizing competence and proficiency.

Although some of the phrases De La Salle uses are grandiloquent, others appear to be pejorative, especially certain terms he employs to describe the qualifications and cultural background of some of the early Brothers. Battersby tends to be not only more literal but also more blunt than I am in translating some of these passages. For example, in a sentence about the mental ability of young candidates for the Community of the Christian Schools, he translates the French expression *l'esprit* as "brains," whereas I prefer the more neutral "basic intelligence." Just how much of De La Salle's seemingly negative phraseology was peculiar to his time and, therefore, less unflattering than its use would be today is a difficult and delicate question that I address in a later section of this introduction. In this new translation, I attempt to smooth out what appear at first glance to be somewhat abrasive phrases.

Finally, like other manuscripts of the time, this document is not punctuated in a consistent way, a situation I have attempted to remedy in this translation if only for the sake of readability. However, there is no desire here to turn De La Salle into the graceful stylist he never was or ever sought to be.

In his biography of the saint, Battersby correctly insists that from his father De La Salle “clearly inherited . . . a logical, forensic turn of mind. Everything he has written bears the stamp of this; even his letters give one the impression of a lawyer, with the incisive penetrating intellect, devoid of sentimentality, clear and concise.”<sup>4</sup> Later, Battersby wonders whether De La Salle’s prose also reflects the influence of Descartes or of an education that placed too much importance on studying Latin and Greek grammar and too little on acquiring the kind of polished and elegant style in French evident in the great writers of the day, such as Racine. Finally, however, he leans to the sensible notion that De La Salle’s is “naturally the type of mind to which pure reasoning appeals.”<sup>5</sup> Throughout this translation I have attempted to retain the logical and legal style of the manuscript.

In summary, I have sought in this translation to dig beneath the surface rhetoric of the text to expose its inner meaning and to employ modern language and terminology for the sake of the contemporary readers to whom this translation is addressed.

### The origin and destination of the document

Only a rough draft of the *Mémoire*, filled with corrections, deletions, and insertions, has survived.<sup>6</sup> Preserved in the Institute archives at the generalate in Rome, the manuscript is not dated or signed, but the handwriting is clearly De La Salle’s.<sup>7</sup>

We can deduce from its contents that the *Mémoire* was written early in 1690. In part four of the document, De La Salle indicates that the Brothers had been wearing their unique habit in the dioceses of Reims and Laon for five years and in Paris for two years before any objections to it had been raised. The Brothers had arrived at Saint Sulpice parish in Paris on the feast of Saint Matthias, 24 February 1688, to assume the operation of the school on rue Princesse.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, the *Mémoire* was probably written early in 1690, after the

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4. Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 11.

5. *Ibid.*, 13–14.

6. The manuscript is made up of two folded sheets with eight sides, seven of which are completely covered with handwriting. The numerous erasures and additions are all made by De La Salle, save for one passage deleted by another hand. It is rare for rough drafts of documents such as the *Mémoire* to have survived from the seventeenth century.

7. Bédel, *The Origins*, 71; Hermans, *Cahiers lasalliens* 5, 302.

8. See Blain, *The Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, book 2, 252; also, Maillefer, *The Life of Saint John Baptist de La Salle*, in *Two Early Biographies*, 68.

Brothers opened a second school in the parish, on rue du Bac, in January. The two-year period would almost have passed by this time. Claims that it may have been written late in 1689 are less solidly supported by the best available evidence or the most logical conjectures.<sup>9</sup>

The document was apparently written in response to the objections that Father Henri Baudrand de La Combe,<sup>10</sup> the pastor of Saint Sulpice, had raised to the distinctive religious habit being worn by the three or four Brothers who were teaching in the two schools of his far-flung parish. He apparently preferred that they adopt instead a shoe-length clerical cassock and ecclesiastical mantle then in common use. We do not know whether Baudrand was actually given the *Mémoire* to read, although this is certainly possible. The impersonal, third-person manner in which De La Salle refers to the pastor suggests that Baudrand never actually saw it,<sup>11</sup> although someone, perhaps by word of mouth, probably communicated to him the arguments contained in this position paper.

It is most improbable that the *Mémoire* was written for the Brothers themselves; they would not need to be informed in such detail about the nature of the Community to which they belonged or about the origins of the religious habit they were then wearing.

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9. Salm says (*The Work Is Yours*, 208) that the *Mémoire* was written in late 1689 or early 1690. Mouton makes the same claim (*Two Early Biographies*, 219, note 90). In his various notes, commentaries, conference outlines, and other material on the habit in Cahiers lasalliens 5, Hermans says in some places that the *Mémoire* was written in late 1689 or early 1690 (see 281, 308), but elsewhere he insists that it was written early in 1690 (see 245, 269–74). However, he seems, finally, for the reasons adduced in the text, to believe that this position paper was written during the first months of 1690.

10. Baudrand was born in 1637 and died in 1699. He joined the Sulpicians, to whom he became deeply devoted for his whole life, in 1663 and earned a doctorate at the Sorbonne in 1666. In 1675, he became the rector of the Sulpician seminary in Clérmont, but in 1684 he was recalled to Saint Sulpice, where he served as one of the spiritual directors. In 1689, he succeeded Father Claude Bottu de La Barmondière as pastor of Saint Sulpice parish, but he retired seven years later on account of ill health. His death was quite strange and yet quite Gallic. Suffering from paralysis and rheumatism, he “went into the room of a winery, where the grapes were fermenting, in the hope that the steamy air would alleviate his rheumatism, [but] he choked on the fumes and died of asphyxiation as he was trying to escape through the door.” See Salm, *John Baptist de La Salle: The Formative Years*, 86.

11. Mouton rightly suggests that the *Mémoire* was written for the “benefit” of Baudrand, even though he may never have actually read it. See *Two Early Biographies*, 219, note 90.

As it turns out, the position paper was written to win over certain superiors and professors of Saint Sulpice Seminary, where De La Salle had studied for the priesthood as a young man. Brother Bernard, the Founder's first biographer, writes that "[De La Salle] showed the document to his spiritual directors and to the superiors of the Saint Sulpice seminary, who strongly approved of his position [on the religious habit]."<sup>12</sup>

In his biography of De La Salle, Canon Jean-Baptiste Blain repeats and amplifies what Bernard says, noting that several men of goodwill had objected to the religious habit that De La Salle had designed for his schoolmasters and even treated him as a "stubborn dolt" for refusing to modify it in any way. Fearing that the Brothers themselves might be impressed by the authority of those who were critical of their unique garb, De La Salle decided to write a lengthy memorandum justifying "their style of dress." According to Blain, De La Salle made such a convincing case that "he won back to his point of view those who seemed to be the most strongly opposed to it."<sup>13</sup>

To whom is Blain referring in this passage? It can't be Father Baudrand alone, for Blain employs the plural pronoun "those," and by emphasizing their eventual conversion to De La Salle's point of view, he suggests that these men were not completely closed-minded about the habit and therefore unapproachable.<sup>14</sup> Blain clearly is referring to

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12. Bernard, *Two Early Biographies*, 322. Calcutt (*De La Salle: A City Saint and the Liberation of the Poor Through Education*) suggests that De La Salle might have consulted the superior of the nearby Jesuit novitiate, or the Vincentians, for advice in composing the *Mémoire*, on the grounds that he mentions both congregations in the manuscript and that their respective superiors are knowledgeable about community life and religious garb. This strikes me as being too speculative and not supported by the existing evidence. See Calcutt, 232.

13. Blain, *The Life*, book 2, 185. Maillefer says the same thing; see *Two Early Biographies*, 49.

14. Blain, book 2, 271. Calcutt raises the possibility that Baudrand alone read the *Mémoire* by suggesting that Blain's use of the plural was only "a discreet way of avoiding obvious mention of one man." See Calcutt, 232. I do not find this plausible, and apparently neither does Calcutt because he goes on to say that "a certain number" of Sulpicians had the "same idea" as Baudrand about the habit, as Blain clearly implies. If Baudrand had been the only one objecting to the habit, De La Salle could have seen him personally, man to man. A written statement, on the other hand, could be passed around to all the critics, including, it is possible, Baudrand himself. See Calcutt, 222–33. Finally, it is significant that both Bernard and Blain say that the *Mémoire* was shown to several Sulpicians.

the Sulpician professors with whom De La Salle had kept in close contact over the years, seeking their advice and support along his life's journey. Later in his biography, Blain goes on to name one of the Sulpician priests to whom De La Salle gave the *Mémoire*. "It is true that De La Salle does not tell us the identity of this person whom he consulted, saying only that he was considered very wise," Blain writes. "But by this laudatory epithet he really indicated the celebrated superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, Monsieur Tronson, whose prudence was widely acknowledged throughout France."<sup>15</sup>

Earlier, Father Louis Tronson had been one of De La Salle's professors as well as his spiritual director. After reading his *Mémoire*,<sup>16</sup> Tronson and the other Sulpicians urged De La Salle to stand firm in opposing any changes to the religious habit the Brothers were then wearing. It seems reasonable to assume that they subsequently had a word with Baudrand, encouraging him to back off from his opposition to the habit—which he apparently did. The pastor may not have personally agreed with all the arguments advanced by De La Salle, but the Brothers were able, in fact, to retain their special religious garb.<sup>17</sup> The strategy that De La Salle pursued proved to be quite astute—using Baudrand's fellow Sulpicians to dissuade him from pressing his case any further.

In the *Mémoire*, De La Salle devotes most of his text to presenting a cogent case for retaining the Brothers' distinctive religious habit. However, the document also includes important information not found in other primary sources. De La Salle mentions both the normal school he set up to train lay teachers for country schools and the preparatory school (juniorate or junior novitiate) he established to

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15. Blain, book 2, 271. Calcutt says that Tronson may have looked at the draft, but then Calcutt raises a doubt by suggesting that Tronson "was very discreet about the affairs of other communities." See Calcutt, 232. I suppose this means that for this reason De La Salle may not have been inclined to consult with him. Given Blain's explicit reference, I do not find Calcutt's suggestion plausible.

16. Salm states (*The Work Is Yours*, 63) that the *Mémoire* is "the result" of a conversation between De La Salle and Tronson. However, neither Bernard nor Blain supports this conclusion. De La Salle wrote the *Mémoire* first and then showed it to Tronson and the other Sulpicians. As Blain clearly indicates, "[De La Salle] drew up a memorandum on the subject [of the religious habit]. This document seemed to be so logically thought out and so strongly worded that the person [Tronson] to whom the holy Founder showed it and whose advice he sought urged him to remain firm on this point." See *The Life*, book 2, 271, and note 8; Bernard, *Two Early Biographies*, 322.

17. Bédel, *The Origins*, 74.

produce new candidates for the Community. Battersby is quite right in noting that “the *Mémoire* constitutes, in fact, a primary source of the greatest importance to the historian” of the early history of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, the document tells us a great deal about the nature of the Community, its resemblance to other religious societies, its distinctly lay character, its educational work, its apostolic mission, its lack of an endowment, its dearth of legal or canonical status (it exists only by the grace of God), its formation programs, its relationships with the clergy, and the simple background of its members. In defending his particular choice of a religious habit for the Brothers, De La Salle is compelled, as it were, to describe in some detail the unique characteristics of the new religious congregation he is in the process of founding, if only because the garb worn by his early followers is an outward manifestation of the inner reality of this novel lay brotherhood devoted exclusively to teaching young boys in tuition-free schools.

An extended commentary on the contours of the new Community is unnecessary here because the information presented in the *Mémoire*, reflecting De La Salle’s mental outlook and writing style, is so clear and straightforward. Consequently, I will concentrate both on the dispute between De La Salle and Baudrand over the kind of religious habit the Brothers should wear and on the impact of the *Mémoire* on the later history of the Institute, especially in the United States of America.

## The nature of the dispute

I should begin by noting that much more is at stake in the dispute between De La Salle and Baudrand than what kind of religious habit the Brothers should be wearing. Salm suggests that the larger question centers on whether De La Salle’s new religious society would be able to regulate itself in both internal and external affairs or would become merely the extension of a parish and its pastor. In particular, Salm believes that the Sulpician Fathers, especially Baudrand, want to gain control of the Community because they believe they can insure its survival better than De La Salle can.<sup>19</sup>

In agreement with this assessment, Hermans argues further that permitting parish priests to make changes in the religious habit and other substantial matters would have imperiled the unity, stability,

18. Battersby, *De La Salle; Letters and Documents*, 239.

19. Salm, *The Work Is Yours*, 64, 69, 96.

and identity of the fledgling Community. Allowing one pastor to meddle in the affairs of the Community would open the door for others to do the same.<sup>20</sup> Also, permitting the Brothers in Paris to wear clerical garb would set them off from their confreres in Champagne, creating an unwanted division in the Community.<sup>21</sup> Bédel, writing on the origins of the Institute, also believes that Baudrand's proposal to change the Brothers' habit reflects a disruptive desire to become involved in the operation of the Community. "The *Mémoire* on the Habit," he argues, is "as much, if not more, concerned with defending the autonomy and special character of the 'Community of the Christian Schools' as with justifying the reasons for maintaining the habit of the Brothers."<sup>22</sup> Mouton, who wrote the notes for two early biographies of De La Salle, states that in the dispute over the religious habit, "the autonomy of the Community was at stake for De La Salle."<sup>23</sup> Finally, Calcutt sums up the message De La Salle is seeking to convey in the *Mémoire* with the blunt phrase, "Hands off!"<sup>24</sup>

### The distinctive habit of the Brothers

However large the question of autonomy loomed in the dispute between De La Salle and Baudrand over the religious habit, the exact features of the garb worn by the early Brothers were also and, of course, more immediately at issue. The description of the Brothers' habit in the *Mémoire*, although fairly detailed, is not complete. It is important, first of all, to note that the habit is neither clerical nor lay, as De La Salle points out in his memorandum, but something in between, or better, a kind of *tertium quid*.

From the attire of clerics, La Salle borrows the elongated, split, white collar (*rabat* in French) and the soutane (cassock). However, he shortens the latter to calf-length, has it cut from rough serge and then dyed black, loosens its shape, and has it fastened in the front with hooks and eyes rather than with buttons.<sup>25</sup> To emphasize its difference from clerical garb, De La Salle dubs this modified soutane a *robe*.

From the attire of laymen, he borrows the heavy, thick-soled shoes worn by the poor, an ordinary man's black hat—purposely widening the brim to set off the Brothers from worldly fashion—and

20. Sauvage, *Frère Maurice Hermans*, Cahiers lasalliens 5, 245.

21. Calcutt, *De La Salle: A City Saint*, 232.

22. Bédel, *The Origins*, 72.

23. *Two Early Biographies*, 219, note 90.

24. Calcutt, *De La Salle: A City Saint*, 234.

25. Blain, book 2, 182.



the coarse overcoat (*capote* in French) favored by the peasants of Champagne.<sup>26</sup> The last, lengthened to reach eight inches from the ground, he also has cut from coarse serge and then dyed black. It was the mayor of Reims, among others, who had suggested to De La Salle that he outfit his schoolmasters with a peasant's overcoat. Apparently, this public official was concerned about the health and welfare of the Brothers. During the severely cold winter of 1684, the schoolmasters required substantial clothing to protect themselves against icy blasts as they walked through the streets of the city to outlying schools. De La Salle readily accepted the mayor's suggestion, and the *capote* immediately became an integral part of the overall religious garb worn by the Brothers.<sup>27</sup>

Blain claims that in addition De La Salle accepted outside advice because "it came from on high, through the mouth of one of the chief magistrates of the city."<sup>28</sup> This would appear to be a pious gloss, if only because De La Salle never hesitates to disagree with those in authority, whether in church or state, when he believes his judgment is better than theirs.

Bernard suggests another, more compelling reason for adopting this *capote*. "What finally convinced M. de La Salle to allow the mantle," he claims, "was the insistent wish of the Brothers themselves to have a habit that would clearly set them apart from the people of the world."<sup>29</sup> This peasants' overcoat was worn like a cape, with the sleeves hanging to the sides, unused.<sup>30</sup> Calcutt makes an interesting point about the development of the habit: it was so tied in with the cold winters of the century and the founding of the Community in the north of France that it might have looked entirely different had De La Salle and the first Brothers lived in another time and place, even as close as the South of France.<sup>31</sup>

During a period in history when clothing indicated social standing, the Brothers' habit, which was not all that different from what other schoolteachers and trainees or even peasants and cart drivers wore, marked them out as members of the lower classes. Theirs was the garb, from the broad-brimmed hat to the thick-soled shoes, of the

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26. Ibid., 186–87; Bernard, *Two Early Biographies*, 322.

27. Blain, book 2, 182; Bernard, *Two Early Biographies*, 321.

28. Blain, book 2, 182.

29. Bernard, *Two Early Biographies*, 322.

30. The *capote*, a heavy overcoat, sometimes with a sort of hood attached to the collar, was usually worn shorter than knee length. The one used by the Brothers was longer and had no hood.

31. Calcutt, *De La Salle: A City Saint*, 235.

common man. As Calcutt dramatically writes, “Not for them the plumed hat, the doublet and hose, the buckled shoes.” In their poverty and simplicity, the Brothers resembled the seventeenth-century figure of the “poor man” in Saint Alban’s cathedral in England.<sup>32</sup> Calcutt makes an interesting point, although I would not want to make too much of it. Unlike monastic habits—those of the Franciscans and the Capuchins come to mind—the religious garb worn by the Brothers included the kind of linen neckwear favored by the secular clergy, who did not, unlike monks or the Brothers themselves, profess a vow of poverty. At the time when linen was so costly, even a simple starched white rabat was regarded as something of a luxury.<sup>33</sup> In the main, however, the notion that the Brothers dressed as ordinary people did remains valid. Yet, their habit in its totality, combining clerical and lay features, was distinctive enough, Calcutt notes, to separate them from the country schoolmasters they trained and to identify them as members of a religious community to which members pledged lifetime loyalty.<sup>34</sup>

### Baudrand’s point of view

Henri Baudrand became pastor of Saint Sulpice on 7 January 1689. A deliberate man, preoccupied at first with clearing an enormous parish debt, he did not raise any objection to the Brothers’ special habit until a year later.<sup>35</sup> Early in 1690, most likely in January, Baudrand was ready to make his move. As a result of a successful lawsuit against the school supervisor for the archdiocese of Paris, the pastor had been able to establish the principle that he was in complete charge of the schools of his parish. Salm surmises that “for this reason he felt justified in making representations [to De La Salle] about the Brothers’ habit.”<sup>36</sup>

In addition, there appears to have been another and perhaps even more important factor provoking what De La Salle describes as Baudrand’s “strong” objection to the religious garb then being worn by the Brothers. Early in 1690, a few of the Brothers had begun walking from their community residence to the new school established on the outskirts of the parish on rue du Bac. Their strange-looking habit may have invited ridicule and jests from people passing them in the

32. Ibid.

33. Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 100.

34. Calcutt, *De La Salle: A City Saint*, 235.

35. Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 61.

36. Salm, *The Work Is Yours*, 63.

crowded streets of this poor section of Paris, as it had done earlier in Reims. As long as the Brothers had remained in the school on rue Princesse, many people living in the parish may not have noticed their presence or paid much attention to them. Their greater visibility may help to explain, Bédél surmises, why Baudrand and his predecessor waited for two years before complaining about the religious garb the Brothers were already wearing when they first arrived in Paris, early in 1688.<sup>37</sup>

A good deal of indirect evidence supplied by Blain supports this version of events. In his biography of De La Salle, Blain melodramatically notes what happened when the Brothers began to wear their religious habit in Reims in 1685:

People pointed the finger of scorn at them. They were escorted with raucous cries amidst scenes of near riot. They were mimicked in public, and whoever invented some new outrage upon them thought he had done something very clever indeed. Jeers and hoots accompanied them wherever they went. Passersby stopped in the streets to take part in the taunts hurled at them. Artisans left their tasks unfinished in their shops to join in the merriment. Street urchins made up a new game: following the Brothers and yelling after them. The mob found pleasure in covering them with abuse; everybody enjoyed playing tricks on them and laughing at their expense.

The same farce began anew day after day. When the Brothers walked to and from school, they were accompanied there and back with vilification. They were lucky when they got off so easily; often they were spattered with mud and pursued by those who threw stones at them until they reached the door of their house.<sup>38</sup>

This account of the public reaction to the Brothers' habit is doubtless exaggerated; however, it does provide a good reason why Baudrand would have wanted the Brothers in his parish to wear a conventional soutane and clerical mantle instead of the strange religious garb they were then wearing. As even Blain concedes, the pastor was probably seeking to spare them from needless ridicule and derision that might be unjustly transferred to the excellent work they were doing in their schools.<sup>39</sup>

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37. Bédél, *The Origins*, 72.

38. Blain, book 2, 187.

39. *Ibid.*, 271.

Battersby seems to undercut this supposition by noting, at least from the point of view of an English visitor of the day, that people in Paris were accustomed to encountering religious on the street dressed in a wide range of rather odd-looking habits.<sup>40</sup> However, the peasants' overcoat that the Brothers wore as a mantle, commonly used in Champagne but not in Paris,<sup>41</sup> may have struck people in the capital as what a "country hick" might wear.

If this multi-faceted explanation of why Baudrand did not immediately raise any objections to the habit as soon as he became pastor is valid, one of De La Salle's main arguments for retaining the Brothers' distinctive habit—that any objection to it should have been lodged when the Brothers first arrived in Paris—loses some, although perhaps not all, of its persuasive power.

Moreover, Baudrand was not alone in opposing the Brothers' rather strange habit. Blain admits that "the public in general agreed with [the pastor of Saint Sulpice] in clamoring for a change of some kind," although perhaps not exactly the one Baudrand had in mind.<sup>42</sup> In defense of the pastor's specific suggestion that the Brothers wear a normal soutane and clerical mantle, I should note that at this time Charity Schools were often operated by clerics who had received the tonsure and minor orders, if not full-fledged ordination to the priesthood, and that the parents of children in the parish had become accustomed to seeing schoolteachers attired in clerical garb. Having the Brothers put on conventional clerical attire, Baudrand probably thought, would help them garner the respect and esteem of the parishioners of Saint Sulpice.

Furthermore, the Brothers' distinctive habit seems to have been designed in part to invite opprobrium and derision, perhaps as a way of separating them from the secular world and teaching them meekness and endurance.<sup>43</sup> We can draw such a conclusion on the basis of solid evidence without assenting to Blain's pious perorations about the heroic humility of the first Brothers in the face of public scorn. That De La Salle has a perfect right to create a habit that expresses the unique vocation of the Brothers as consecrated lay teachers (but not as members of the clergy) goes without saying; that he has both the wisdom to do so and the courage to resist changing the habit once it was established cannot be doubted—and indeed can and perhaps even should be highly praised.

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40. Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 100.

41. Blain, book 2, 182.

42. *Ibid.*, 271.

43. *Ibid.*, 187.

Nonetheless, it is important for historians to be fair to Baudrand and to his point of view in this matter. Given what I have said thus far as to both ascertainable fact and reasonable conjecture, it is possible that the pastor of Saint Sulpice objected to the Brothers' habit on aesthetic grounds. In his eyes a soutane that reached only to the calves, a hat with an oversized brim, and a peasant's overcoat worn as a mantle with sleeves hanging empty at the sides looked quite odd as a religious habit, maybe even ridiculous. That a question of taste put Baudrand and De La Salle at odds may be inferred from Blain's comment that De La Salle "could not bring himself to yield to reasons of mere propriety."<sup>44</sup> The word *propriety* suggests seemliness and suitability, although not stylishness.

It was not that Baudrand wanted the Brothers to become clerics. De La Salle admits that the pastor opposed giving the Brothers the tonsure or, by implication, a classical education. He just wanted them to wear something more conventional and tasteful, and to appear neat and clean to the public they served. We can draw such a conclusion, even as to the issue of cleanliness, by carefully reading between the lines of this passage from Blain:

The habit that the person in question [Baudrand] wanted the Brothers to wear would have at once violated simplicity, poverty, and humility which these 'new men' made profession of. Along with concern for cleanliness, it would have opened the door to vanity; and self-love as well as love of the world would have been favored thereby.<sup>45</sup>

It is noteworthy that in later years the Brothers lengthened the robe to shoe level and the *capote* and outlandish hat fell out of use in France. In Italy, where the Brothers wore a widely used, round clerical hat rather than the one the Founder had given them, they made changes in their attire in order to appear less French and more clerical.<sup>46</sup> Over the years, it became increasingly difficult for ordinary people to distinguish the Brothers' robe from a priest's cassock, especially in Districts of the Institute where they wore the robe gathered in at the waist, somewhat along the lines of a clerical cassock. In the long run, Baudrand's views on the habit—that it should be conventional

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44. *Ibid.*, 185; see also, Maillefer, *Two Early Biographies*, 49.

45. Blain, book 2, 185.

46. De La Salle's letters to Gabriel Drolin in Rome repeatedly urge him to maintain the Brothers' garb (*Letters*, 28.9, 29.5, 31.5–7). I am grateful to Paul Grass for these observations.

and tasteful—prevailed. The full-length and flowing black robe, uncluttered with buttons and set off by a starched white rabat, came to be regarded as a dignified, handsome, and scholarly garb. (Although De La Salle implies in the *Mémoire* that with the passage of time, the Brothers' habit would gain more and more acceptance as people got used to it, the lengthening of the robe and the discarding of odd accessories certainly helped in the process.)

Implying that the dispute between Baudrand and De La Salle reflects a simple difference of opinion or taste, Bernard sensibly notes that “not everyone thinks alike.”<sup>47</sup> Other biographers are less generous toward the pastor of Saint Sulpice. Battersby suggests that he possessed a “conservative outlook” molded by many years as a seminary professor.<sup>48</sup> Maillefer cryptically notes in discussing the question of the Brothers' religious garb that Father Baudrand was pious but also “of a peculiar bent of mind.”<sup>49</sup> Perhaps these carefully chosen phrases are meant to imply that this priest could be somewhat opinionated and stubborn, charges that were also leveled against De La Salle.<sup>50</sup> Notwithstanding what Maillefer and Battersby have implied about Baudrand's conservatism, it seems possible that in asking for a change in the Brothers' religious garb, he was only looking out for the welfare of the Community, at least as he understood it, and was not being particularly inflexible or hardheaded. But, of course, the real question lurking behind all the others is whether the Sulpician priests, Baudrand in particular, should be looking after the Institute's interests or whether these were better left in the hands of De La Salle and his Brothers. Aside from this consideration, another important question, already hinted at, set the two men at loggerheads: the vital question of what stance the Brothers should take toward the secular world and public opinion.

Maillefer believes that De La Salle rejected Baudrand's suggestions because he “feared that by giving the Brothers a more fashionable garment, he would encourage in them a desire for ostentation and by following the views of this person [the pastor of Saint Sulpice], much as he respected his ideas and influence, he would lose something of the simplicity of the Institute.”<sup>51</sup> In much the same vein, Blain contends that De La Salle rebuffed Baudrand's advice because if it had been followed, the Brothers' habit would have become “more elegant

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47. Bernard, *Two Early Biographies*, 322.

48. Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 98.

49. Maillefer, *Two Early Biographies*, 49.

50. Blain, book 2, 185, 272; Salm, *The Work Is Yours*, 64.

51. Maillefer, *Two Early Biographies*, 49.

and more to the taste of the public, thus causing those who wore it to be in greater danger of losing their spirit of simplicity and of contempt for the world.”<sup>52</sup>

Employing extravagant language, Blain then proceeds to expatiate on De La Salle’s wisdom in designing a contemptible habit, at one point describing it as nothing less than “an ignominious garb which resembled that which the soldiers put upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ in derision.” According to Blain, the Founder had learned from the history of the church that the religious habits of many monks had once been “found shocking by the wise and by the lovers of this world.” Early hermits had been berated for their simple garb by heretical emperors. The first Franciscans, dressed in brown sackcloth and “girt with a cord,” had been beaten when they first entered Germany. The Capuchin Fathers had been ridiculed as well for their strange appearance. But in all these cases, wearing coarse clothing had the good effect of showing “contempt for the world” and drawing down, as if by choice, “its scorn.”

With all these “striking examples” in mind, Blain claims, De La Salle sought to “make his disciples esteem and love” their humble habit as the garb of Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows. “He wanted them,” Blain says of the Founder, “to consider ill-treatment as the best way of sharing in the lot of the Crucified and to respect the habit that procured such ignominy for them.”<sup>53</sup> This overwrought account of the humble origins of the Brothers’ habit conveniently ignores the fact that the linen rabat they wore around their necks was a bit of a luxury that poor people could not afford.

If we are to believe Blain, De La Salle envied the Brothers for the contempt and the scorn their habit invited, and so “he donned it himself, so as to share along with his children in the various kinds of humiliations with which the world honored this habit while thinking it was discrediting it.”<sup>54</sup> Despite his upper-middle-class background, advanced education, and former status as a cathedral canon, when De La Salle substituted for one of the Brothers in the classroom, he did indeed wear a humble habit similar to that worn by his Brothers, along with the heavy, thick-soled shoes favored by the peasants and a broad-brimmed hat.<sup>55</sup>

Bernard, far more temperate than Blain, emphasizes nonetheless De La Salle’s spirit of poverty and simplicity, noting that the Founder

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52. Blain, book 2, 185.

53. *Ibid.*, 184; this reference also applies to the preceding paragraph.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Bernard, 282; Battersby, *St. John Baptist De La Salle*, 282.

“began to neglect his appearance” even as a cathedral canon. Perhaps concerned that readers might conclude that De La Salle became unkempt in his quest for detachment, Bernard hastens to add that he never became “unbecoming.” “Later,” Bernard goes on to say, “he showed how little importance he attached to finery in clothes by wearing a habit similar to that of the Brothers of his Institute and thick shoes worn by peasants or cart drivers.”<sup>56</sup> This indifference to propriety doubtless shocked members of the fastidious middle class to which De La Salle belonged, even though it signaled a desire not only for humiliation but also for solidarity with the men with whom he had cast his lot.

It would probably be a mistake to accept uncritically Blain’s statements about the Founder’s views on the habit. The picture he paints of De La Salle is that of a pious diehard bent on pursuing every species of self-abnegation practiced in the religious circles of the day. The image we form of De La Salle after reading the *Mémoire* is quite different. The prose style reveals a man who is straightforward, practical, steadfast, down-to-earth, and completely lacking in illusions about human nature. Such qualities are not necessarily incompatible with religious zealotry in the abstract, but I personally feel strongly that in his desire to make De La Salle into a demonstrable saint, Blain overlooks his more human qualities and endearing traits. Having said this, I must acknowledge that De La Salle did practice severe penances (by today’s standards although not by those of his time), that he sought out humiliations and deprivations, and that he was completely indifferent to the world’s opinions, values, and styles. Putting aside Blain’s overly pious rhetoric, it seems fair to conclude that we must place De La Salle’s whole attitude toward the religious habit within the larger context of the seventeenth-century ascetical practices that expressed his own spiritual outlook—a viewpoint deeply rooted in mortification, self-denial, and separation from society.

For Baudrand, the dispute over the habit revolves around conventional conceptions of public propriety; for De La Salle, much more is at stake: his whole spiritual outlook and, consequently, his attitude toward secular society, as well as his deeply held notions about the simplicity, poverty, and disdain for the world that should characterize the members of the religious society he is founding.<sup>57</sup>

No one who studies the life of De La Salle will deny that he is attempting to cut off himself and his Brothers from the secular and, in a sense, even from the ecclesiastical world of his day, especially from

56. Bernard, *Two Early Biographies*, 282.

57. Blain, book 2, 184.



those intellectual currents of rationalism, skepticism, and relativism that we have come to call the Enlightenment. He wants the Brothers to be as detached from the world as he is. In many respects, the religious habit that De La Salle is so vigorously defending is not only a badge of humility but also a buffer against familiarity and a sign of separation. De La Salle gradually comes to believe that Divine Providence is guiding him in founding the Brothers of the Christian Schools. Defending the Brothers' habit is, therefore, tantamount to defending the Community itself, which in turn he regards as the work of God.<sup>58</sup>

On his part, Baudrand apparently would prefer that the Brothers, by wearing conventional clothing, identify themselves more closely with the institutional church in France and conform more readily to the standards of seventeenth-century French society, while retaining the kind of edifying religious outlook he exemplifies in his own life as a devoted pastor. Baudrand is the traditionalist, upholding accepted standards of taste and decorum; De La Salle is the radical, trying to break the grip of custom and create something new and different. I do not want to press this point too far; De La Salle is conservative by nature, thoroughly orthodox, remarkably levelheaded, and resistant to change in religious communities, as the *Mémoire* clearly confirms. Perhaps his radicalism, his intransigence regarding the habit, his indifference to personal appearance, and his decision to debase himself by wearing the Brothers' strange habit reflect his deep, although sometimes retrospective, conviction that God is directing him along his life's journey.<sup>59</sup>

It would seem that Lasallian scholars seldom accord the views of the pastor of Saint Sulpice on the religious habit the full and appreciative attention they give to those of De La Salle. This generally being the case, I think it is appropriate to attempt here, in the interest of fairness, to understand Baudrand's point of view—beyond saying, as just about everyone seems obliged to do, that he is a good and devoted man, deeply concerned about the poor,<sup>60</sup> but on this point just plain wrong, if not somewhat headstrong. It is crucial in this matter not to make Baudrand into the human foil of an avowed saint, as if we were always seeking to find reasons why De La Salle is right in every dispute and those who disagree with him are wrong. This effort would do justice neither to the Founder nor to those who opposed him.

58. Campos, *L'itinéraire évangélique*, 190–201.

59. *Ibid.*, 199.

60. See Maillefer, *Two Early Biographies*, 49; Blain, book 2, 184, 271; Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 127.

Perhaps we come closer to the truth, following Bernard's lead, if we interpret the dispute between De La Salle and Baudrand over the habit as a legitimate difference of opinion with sound arguments on both sides. It would certainly be wrong to imply that these two men do not respect each other because of this dispute or other disagreements they undoubtedly had.<sup>61</sup> Such is not the case. Baudrand had been De La Salle's professor at the seminary at Saint Sulpice and, later, his spiritual director. He had been instrumental in bringing the Brothers to the parish, had intervened on De La Salle's behalf in disputes with other priests and the masters of the Little Schools,<sup>62</sup> and was impressed with the good work done by the Brothers in the two schools of the parish. Blain describes Baudrand as "a person of distinguished merit" whom De La Salle "respected highly."<sup>63</sup>

### De La Salle's point of view

Having attempted to give Baudrand's side of the story, I now wish to present in detail, as fully and forcefully as possible, De La Salle's case for the odd sort of habit that he had designed in collaboration with the early Brothers. Most of his arguments for retaining a distinctive and unique habit stem from one central concern—namely, to establish and safeguard the unique vocation of the Brothers as lay religious who are devoted exclusively to teaching, a state in life that the distinctive religious habit attempts to convey visibly. This preoccupation also helps to account for De La Salle's firm opposition to permitting the Brothers to study the Classics (which at that time meant Latin and Greek), to receive the tonsure, to serve at the altar or fraternize with priests, or—most important of all—to wear a clerical cassock.

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61. Baudrand upset De La Salle by insisting that young candidates of the Community serve as altar boys for the entire morning, by opposing for strictly parochial reasons the establishment of a novitiate in the parish of Saint Sulpice, and by failing on one occasion to pay the salaries of the Brothers who were teaching in the newly opened school on the rue du Bac. See Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 89, 99, 109, 120, 122–23, 126; Salm, *The Work Is Yours*, 59–66, 69, 72, 75–76; Maillefer, *Two Early Biographies*, 72–73. Blain says that Baudrand's failure to pay the Brothers' salaries resulted in part from De La Salle's firm position on retaining the habit and establishing a novitiate (book 2, 320), but Calcutt notes that the pastor was trying his best to feed the "wretches" of the parish and the poor pouring in from the countryside. In short, the pastor may simply not have had enough funds (Calcutt, 253).

62. These teachers, who charged tuition, regarded De La Salle's Brothers as unfair competitors and, therefore, took him to court.

63. Blain, book 2, 185.

Today, De La Salle's prohibitions may seem rather stringent—he even questions whether young men who know Latin and Greek should be accepted into the Community, finally deciding that they can be received provided they give up classical studies in the future—but it is relevant to recall that the vocation of a lay teaching Brother was then something entirely new in the church. This vocation, fragile and not fully formed, needed to be protected and defended with great force and conviction. One way of distinguishing the Brothers both from the secular teachers trained to teach in country schools and from the curates serving in urban churches was to fashion a habit that borrowed from both states of life but could not be fully identified with either one. This is obviously De La Salle's main intent in designing and then defending the Brothers' unique religious habit, and it may even be a major reason why people on the street make fun of it in the beginning. They cannot easily determine whether it is fish or fowl, to use the commonplace expression—in other words, whether the Brothers are laymen or members of the clergy.

In analyzing De La Salle's specific arguments for retaining a unique and special habit, we are struck immediately and forcefully by the practical bent of his mind. He contends that a priest's mantle would not only lead people to assume—wrongly, of course—that a Brother is a member of the clergy but also get in the way of his work as a teacher. A master, attired in the cape worn by a cleric, can easily knock over the young children he is trying to line up, whether in or out of the classroom. (We can smile while conjuring up such a scene but wonder whether De La Salle is stretching for an argument here.) Moreover, the cloak actually worn by the Brothers over their shortened soutane had proved useful in keeping them warm on the way to and from outlying schools and in frigid classrooms during winter. Such a practical benefit carries great weight with De La Salle, as the *Mémoire* clearly shows. As Campos emphasizes, virtually all of the arguments De La Salle advances in favor of retaining the Brothers' unique habit are based on their lived experience.<sup>64</sup> This consideration may also help to account for his apparent inflexibility in the face of Baudrand's objections.

A distinctive and unique habit is designed, De La Salle argues, not only to give outward expression to the inner reality of the Brothers' calling but also to engender respect and admiration from their students and the parents, which it apparently did after some initial adverse reaction.<sup>65</sup> The Brothers are not priests, who preside at the altar,

64. Campos, *L'itinéraire évangélique*, 195.

65. Blain, book 2, 183.

but they *are* vowed religious who, in the language of the day, have given up the world for a semi-cloistered life of meditation and mortification. In short, they are not to fraternize either with priests or with secular persons, and a special, distinctive habit will help to guard against this pitfall. Blain goes to great lengths in stressing this benefit of the habit.<sup>66</sup>

Even more importantly, a religious (but not clerical) habit is intended to produce important effects in the minds of the Brothers. De La Salle believes that a distinctive garb will help them identify with the religious society to which they belong, give the impression that the Community is stable and viable, lend a kind of outward solemnity and seriousness to their vocation, encourage them to follow the rules and customs proper to their state, and remove the temptation to forsake the tedious life of a teacher for the status and comfort of the clerical state. Apparently, he also fears that if the Brothers are given a priest's mantle in preference to the humble habit they actually wear, they will be tempted to abscond with it as soon as the thought crosses their mind and return home bedecked like a gentleman "when they had brought with them only the clothes of a peasant or a laborer." Here, indeed, is another of the eminently practical arguments that De La Salle musters in defense of the Brothers' unique religious garb.

It is often said that the monk makes the habit, and not the reverse. De La Salle fully and explicitly acknowledges this truism, although he does not apply it in his dispute with Baudrand. According to Blain,

This great man [Baudrand], whose merits equaled his reputation, felt—as did many other persons—that De La Salle should not remain so inflexible about modifying external details which did not really affect the interior. Since the habit does not make the monk, the Founder should not have been so set on the Brothers' garb, which attracted attention by its outlandish appearance and only made people laugh at and ridicule those who wore it.<sup>67</sup>

For De La Salle this argument is just too slick. Public scorn does not concern him. Although it is true that the habit does not make the religious, it is also certain that the habit should faithfully express who he or she is. A clerical soutane and mantle would suggest that a Brother is part of the clergy when he is not. A religious habit, De La Salle knows, does not guarantee that the person who wears it will act

66. Blain, book 2, 183.

67. *Ibid.*, 270–71.

virtuously, but it is a help nonetheless. People are not angels; for human beings, external symbols not only express interior states of mind and heart but also help to engender them.

De La Salle believes that the habit the Brothers wear will serve as a constant reminder to them of the virtuous life they ought to lead. “This habit, simple and plain,” he writes in the meditation for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, “gives a pious and reserved appearance which edifies the world and imposes a kind of external restraint on those who wear it. It is a holy habit because it is an exterior sign of the commitment made by those who wear it to live a holy life.”<sup>68</sup> There is much merit in what De La Salle says about the power of clothing to influence human behavior. Clothing can and does express who we are, determine to a large extent how others react to us, put limits on how we act in certain situations, and help us create an identity.<sup>69</sup>

De La Salle is right to insist that the Brothers wear a religious garb proper to and expressive of their unique calling. In a certain broad sense, the religious habit can be considered a sacramental, which is a uniquely Catholic way of looking at things, but it cannot perform any magic. “If it is true that this habit,” De La Salle admits in the same meditation, “should constantly remind them of [their commitment to live a holy life], it is also true that it is not this habit that makes them holy, and it happens only too often that it serves to cover great faults.”

In the final analysis, when people enter the religious life, it is more important to change their life than their clothing. All too often, they wear religious garb while harboring worldly ideas and values within their heart.<sup>70</sup> To confirm this truism, De La Salle has but to look at some of the bishops and clerics with whom he must deal.

## Observations about De La Salle’s point of view

Despite the power and depth of the Founder’s musings on the habit, it is only fair to admit that many of his arguments for insisting that the Brothers wear a distinctive habit reveal a remarkably realistic opinion of the educational and cultural backgrounds of the first Brothers. Only simple men might conclude that the Community, merely because its members wear a habit, is a vital institution not needing an endowment, that rules and regulations should be obeyed just because of the clothes a person wears, or that wearing a habit will in itself remove

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68. *Meditations*, 60.1.

69. Maillefer, *Two Early Biographies*, 48.

70. *Meditations*, 60.1.

the temptation to leave the Community and even help preserve their vocation.

In the *Mémoire*, De La Salle describes some of the first Brothers as being “uneducated,” “uncultured,” and somewhat “impressionable.” For such simple men, even more than for the followers of Saint Vincent de Paul, material tokens or outward signs such as a religious habit are apparently essential in attracting them to the Community in the first place and in retaining their allegiance once they join. Given De La Salle’s family background, education, and upper-middle-class outlook, his decision to abandon his privileged life and join wholeheartedly in the work of the schoolmasters appears all the more dramatic and admirable, but his commitment to them does not erase what is plainly evident in the *Mémoire*—his frank and candid assessment of the educational level and cultural background of some of the early Brothers. It is important to note, however, that the Brothers teaching in Paris and elsewhere in France in 1690 are more refined than the schoolmasters gathered around De La Salle in Reims from 1680 to 1682, whom he then ranked beneath his personal valet.<sup>71</sup>

In his translation of the *Mémoire*, Battersby softens only slightly the hard-edged language De La Salle uses to describe not only the early Brothers but also many parish priests of the day. In contrast, Bédél seeks to extract the most benign possible interpretation from certain seemingly pejorative phrases found in the document. He claims that the description of the first Brothers as having “very mediocre minds” should be understood as “average, ordinary. No doubt the Brothers tended to be people with a lot of common sense and with practical, rather than brilliant, minds. It should be said, all the same, that some proved to be very competent in their work.”<sup>72</sup>

Although Bédél’s observation is certainly true, we must note that in parts of the *Mémoire*, De La Salle does not seem terribly impressed by the “common sense” of some of the first Brothers. The contention that they might well run away, dressed like a gentleman, if given a clerical mantle suggests that they could be wily or, perhaps, only desperate. Moreover, in another place De La Salle complains that many of the first Brothers are “impulsive,” which is not a characteristic normally associated with common sense. Bédél believes that we should understand the French term *grossier*, as applied to the Brothers, as “without elegance or refinement” (*sans élégance, sans finesse*) rather than as “uncouth,” which is probably fair, as also is his rendering of *sans élévation d’esprit* as “unpretentious, simple” (*sans prétension*,

71. Blain, book 1, 80.

72. Bédél, *The Origins*, 78.

simple) rather than “not highbrow.” Rejecting a literal translation of *sans étude et sans lumière*, which might be translated as “without studies and dull,” Bédel prefers to understand the phrase as meaning “without very extensive intellectual formation” (*sans formation intellectuelle très poussée*).<sup>73</sup> His point that De La Salle’s remarks should be interpreted within the context of his times and not according to the present-day meaning of certain phrases is valid, but his efforts to place De La Salle’s remarks in the best possible light are generous.

A defender of De La Salle might argue that his somewhat negative language about the background of the early Brothers simply reflects the reality of the situation and nothing more. Campos insists that De La Salle is not an apologist for ignorance (he had earned a doctorate in theology); he wants the Brothers to become competent teachers but without studying Latin and Greek. Classical studies would distract these schoolteachers from their primary mission and from their prayers and community life.<sup>74</sup>

Notwithstanding these qualifications, it is difficult for a modern reader to read parts of the *Mémoire* without feeling uneasy about the tone of the language and the adamant (although completely understandable) rejection of what we have come to know as the liberal arts, or classical, tradition in education. Despite his superior education, De La Salle always comes across more as a persuasive lawyer than as an abstract intellectual.

Calcutt argues that the harsh language of the *Mémoire* reflects the “special pleading” intrinsic to such a memorandum. “We do not have to take such a paper as giving us La Salle’s founding principles for his society,” Calcutt insists. “What stands out, for instance, is that three times he makes out the Brothers to be uncouth, of average intelligence, very impressionable, kept in order by the habit.” Such a characterization of the early Brothers conveniently overlooks important facts: a number of the early members of the Institute came from well-to-do families; a few, such as Nicolas Vuyart and Henri l’Heureux, were quite capable; many were intelligent despite their “rough and ready” background, and some were “well advanced in holiness.” De La Salle’s “loving dedication” to his first followers fails to shine through the *Mémoire* because of his argumentative style of writing. What the Founder is trying to say, according to Calcutt, is simply this: “Surely you do not expect such men [without a university education] to don clerical dress!”<sup>75</sup>

73. Ibid., 78, 79.

74. Campos, *L’Itinéraire Évangélique*, 194.

75. Calcutt, *De La Salle: A City Saint*, 234.

De La Salle's argument that the habit does "everything" to make candidates into faithful and obedient Brothers is another example, Calcutt says, of his falling into a rhetorical trap. The Founder is well aware that many Brothers leave the Community despite the habit they wear. He also knows that a person's "sense of vocation and dedication" ensures his perseverance more than the clothes he wears. Calcutt points out that when De La Salle "came later to list the essential supports of the society, it is the Brothers' own spirituality that he highlighted and certain community practices, not the habit." Moreover, the Founder makes no mention in the *Mémoire* of the vow of obedience, which the Brothers had been making since 1686, and "yet this had much more to do with the Brothers' dedication and unity." So we must conclude, Calcutt seems to suggest, that the very genre of the *Mémoire* makes it somewhat tendentious, despite De La Salle's obvious efforts to be factual, diplomatic, and even charitable.<sup>76</sup>

### Historical implications of the *Mémoire*

As an historical document, the *Mémoire* is most significant for setting forth De La Salle's arguments for the Brothers' unique habit as well as for their ministry as consecrated lay teachers of the Gospel and of basic subjects. This perspective is the reason why I have until now stressed these two themes. But history exists more in the minds of living human beings than in the documents stored in archives. The original meaning and significance of these documents can change when applied to later times. Once the revolutionary idea of consecrated lay teachers was established in the church and the religious habit worn by the Brothers was shorn of its idiosyncratic features, the educational philosophy contained in the *Mémoire* became a crucial determining factor in the unfolding history of the Institute.

Not until the late-nineteenth century, largely because of adaptations made by the Brothers in the United States of America, did this lay religious institute broaden its educational mission to include teaching the liberal arts to young people from all social classes. At that point some Brothers came to question, if not challenge, De La Salle's stricture against the Classics, his confinement of the Brothers to elementary and secondary education, and his insistence that the Brothers do not need advanced studies. His candid assessment of the educational background (or lack thereof) of some early Brothers conveniently leads us to consider the *Mémoire's* historical impact, which we can see to have been enormous, especially for the Institute in the

76. Calcutt, *De La Salle: A City Saint*, 234–35.



United States. In the late nineteenth century, some De La Salle Christian Brothers there evolved into the mirror opposite of the first Brothers: they became erudite university professors and high school teachers who taught the Classics to members of all social classes.

Many early documents in the history of the Institute, although vital for understanding its foundation, are so rooted in the spirituality and the ecclesiastical milieu of seventeenth-century France that it is difficult, although certainly not impossible, to translate them into a modern context or to find them entirely meaningful for the kind of life the Brothers and their Lasallian colleagues of the twentieth century are expected to live. The same condition might have been true of the *Mémoire* if the French superiors who governed the Institute until the middle of the twentieth century had not fervently believed that the ideas contained in this legal brief, especially those pertaining to the Classics, could be transplanted to cultures and countries quite different in their traditions and institutions than those known to De La Salle.

By the time the Brothers arrived in the United States of America in the 1840s, their characteristic black robe and white rabat had gained universal acceptance and respect in the church, not simply because of the high quality of the educators who wore it but because their apparel now looked more like a traditional religious habit. Indeed, ordinary Catholics might easily have confused the Brothers with priests or even with those Protestant ministers who still wore the split white collar. The Brothers had no need to adapt to the American scene with respect to their religious garb, although on the street they did choose to wear a black suit.

In a land lacking endowed parishes, wealthy aristocrats, and state support, the Brothers had to abandon the notion of gratuitous, or tuition-free, schools as described in the *Mémoire*, but they obtained without much difficulty the permission to charge modest tuition to the families of the immigrant children who flocked to their schools in the United States. In 1854, the General Chapter of the Institute, in view of the missionary status of the United States and the authorization provided by a papal indult, granted an exemption to the rule enjoining gratuitous instruction.<sup>77</sup>

The educational philosophy implicit in the *Mémoire* was an entirely different matter. A disagreement between the American Brothers and the French superiors over whether Latin and Greek should be taught on the secondary and the university level in the United States

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77. Angelus Gabriel, *The Christian Brothers in the United States, 1848–1948*, 54.

led to a bitter controversy in the Institute that began in the 1850s and was not finally settled until Pope Pius XI intervened in 1923.

The Brothers in the United States had many sound reasons for departing in significant respects from the educational work that the Institute had pioneered in France during the time of De La Salle. Until 1908, the church considered the United States to be a missionary land; there was a severe shortage of native-born priests. Bishops throughout the country wanted to use the Brother's high schools and colleges as minor seminaries to prepare young men for their priestly studies. This curriculum required the teaching of Latin and Greek.

Until the introduction of electives at Harvard University late in the nineteenth century and the proliferation of university science courses at about the same time, most students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in American colleges and universities were required to take a four-year course in the Classics. A classical education also served as a ladder whereby the immigrant boys who attended the Brothers' schools could climb upward socially, gaining access to liberal professions such as law, medicine, and teaching, as well as the priesthood. Along with the students they served in an educational system extending from elementary school to university, the Brothers themselves began to advance educationally in this land of relative equality and seemingly endless opportunity.

The vast majority of Brothers in the United States then taught, as did their confreres in France, in elementary schools, protectories, orphanages, and vocational schools. However, some Brothers began to offer advanced instruction in classical academies and four-year university colleges. Largely through self-education,<sup>78</sup> a significant minority of American Brothers became what De La Salle never envisioned for his followers: cultured and enlightened university professors—in other words, all the things that the early Brothers, through no fault of their own, were not, could not be, and never imagined they would ever become. For the French superiors, an American Brother such as Azarias Mulaney, a distinguished college president, professor, lecturer, and author,<sup>79</sup> could only be regarded as a kind of biological oddity, an anomaly, and a contradiction in terms.

In the mind of the French superiors, studying the Classics came to be identified with intellectual pride, if not with disloyalty and defection. In support of this conviction, they could point to a passage in

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78. The Brothers did not begin until the 1920s to acquire university degrees before teaching.

79. See Battersby, *The Christian Brothers in the United States, 1900–1925*, 59, 60, 334.

the *Mémoire* suggesting that those Brothers who had begun to study the classical humanities often ended up leaving the Institute, as well as to paragraphs in Blain underscoring the same theme. An Institute circular issued in 1897 cites Blain's biography in favor of upholding the ban on teaching Latin and Greek. This official document declares, quoting directly from Blain:

Experience has shown, in fact, that the Brothers who know Latin [or who have some acquaintance with philosophy and theology] are not, as a rule, those who succeed best in the Institute and that several of them failed to persevere because they never acquired the spirit of simplicity and humility that their vocation calls for. Instead, allowing themselves to be led astray by vain dreams, they wanted to pass as learned [or, as another translation would have it, play the role of professors] rather than learn how to carry out the ordinary duties of their state well, something which is not as easy as we might imagine.<sup>80</sup>

Unlike France, where schools and colleges reflected the country's class structure, the United States took pride in an educational system, whether public or private, where ideally the young could move upward because of their wits and not their wealth, much less their pedigree. Ignorant or even contemptuous of the American political and social system based on the republican values that had caused the Brothers in France so much grief and suffering since the Revolution in 1789, the superiors of the Institute believed that in teaching Latin and Greek, the Brothers in the United States were blurring the vision of the Founder, abandoning the poor and working classes, becoming puffed up with intellectual pride, and poaching on the preserve of the Jesuits, supposedly the intellectual leaders among the teaching congregations.

Determined to return the American Brothers to the path from which they had strayed, the French superiors, working with the Vatican and the Jesuits, succeeded in 1900 in banning the study of Latin and Greek in the Institute's high schools and colleges in the United States.<sup>81</sup> For the next twenty-three years, the Institute in the United

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80. "The General Chapter and Its Results," *Instructive and Administrative Circular No. 75*, 26 April 1897, 83. See Blain, book 2, 284. I have inserted in brackets the two phrases that are in Blain's original text but that are not quoted in the Circular.

81. See Isetti, "The Latin Question: A Conflict in Catholic Higher Education Between Jesuits and Christian Brothers in Late Nineteenth-century America."

States did not appreciably increase its membership, whereas other congregations of teaching Brothers flourished.

In the argument that raged on both sides of the Atlantic during the so-called Latin Question, the *Mémoire sur l'Habit*, for obvious reasons, played an important role. For the French superiors, this document sets forth in unmistakable terms De La Salle's adamant opposition to permitting any of the Brothers to study the Classics, in effect, to study Latin and Greek. Candidates who had already begun a classical education are forced to give it up once they join the new Community. De La Salle believes, as the *Mémoire* clearly sets forth, that a classical education is not necessary for an elementary schoolteacher, that studying the Classics might tempt the Brothers to forsake their humble vocation, and that pursuing the ancient languages will take up too much time better spent mastering and teaching practical subjects or engaging in prayer and meditation. De La Salle wisely insists that his Brothers teach their students to read in their mother tongue without having to master the intricacies of Latin grammar and syntax. He believes that the Brothers should concentrate their apostolate on the lower and, to a limited extent, the middle class, teaching them practical subjects and religion in their native tongue. Other orders, such as the Oratorians and the Jesuits, are already taking care of the children of the upper class.

Moreover, De La Salle is well aware that congregations founded to educate the poor—for example, the one established by Saint Joseph Calasanz<sup>82</sup>—had drifted from their original purpose because the priests who composed them became absorbed in the classical studies favored by the parents of upper-class families for their sons.<sup>83</sup> At all costs, he does not want the Brothers to operate schools comparable to those staffed by the Jesuits, who offer a classical education to the upper class. When the bishop of Chartres insists that he offer Latin in his schools, De La Salle holds firm in his opposition. When the town council of Valréas insists that the Brothers teach their students the rudiments of Latin grammar, he closes the school rather than give in.<sup>84</sup> However adamant he is, all of De La Salle's objections to permitting the Brothers to study and teach the classical languages are quite sensible given the educational work that he insists the Brothers should be doing.

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82. Saint Joseph Calasanz (1556–1648) founded the Clerks Regular of the Christian Schools.

83. Battersby, *St. John Baptist de La Salle*, 73.

84. Battersby, *The Christian Brothers in the United States, 1900–1925*, 10–11.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the Brothers had firmly established their unique vocation in the church; studying the Classics in itself was no longer an inducement to become a priest. Moreover, the Brothers in the United States were teaching in classical academies and university colleges, where the Classics formed an integral part of the liberal arts curriculum to which children of all classes now had access. There can be no doubt that De La Salle, an important figure in his place and time, regarded the prohibition of the Classics as fundamentally important—indeed, as a defining characteristic of the religious Community he was founding.

The American Brothers argued that historical circumstances had changed so drastically that a prohibition once considered essential had become an obstacle to meeting a pressing educational need in a land and a century quite different than those in which the Institute had been born some two hundred years before. Had De La Salle lived in the United States in the late nineteenth century, they argued, he would have approved of teaching the Classics to young men from all social classes. Wasn't he, after all, an educational reformer who responded boldly to the signs of the times? This argument fell on deaf ears.

In 1897, the Superior General told the delegates of the General Chapter:

If our Institute, contrary to our Rules, were to admit classical teaching in its establishments, it would in a short time result in a complete deviation from its spirit and providential end. It would allow itself to be invaded by ideas of pride and ambition which would be fatal to it; it would rapidly depart from its road.<sup>85</sup>

From De La Salle's pen, such sentiments would sound sensible and even stirring; now they seemed stale and stultifying, at least to the American Brothers. In the New World, a radical new idea was taking hold—providing the best possible education, an excellent liberal arts education, to young men of all classes and not just to the social elite. What had been reserved in Europe for the sons of the aristocracy would now become the birthright of every young man in America, even if he was the offspring of poor immigrant parents from Ireland, Poland, or Italy.

In a sense, the Brothers in the United States in the late nineteenth century refounded the Institute by broadening its educational goals and philosophy, while embracing at the same time the Enlightenment

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85. "The General Chapter and Its Results," 67.

ideals of democracy, separation of church and state, and religious toleration that De La Salle and the first Brothers found abhorrent. The French superiors of the Institute were not certain what was more obnoxious—the demands of the American Brothers to teach the Classics or their resort to petitions and plebiscites in furthering their cause.

In 1923, Pope Pius XI acknowledged the wisdom and justice of the American position on the Latin Question. In a remarkable letter to the General Chapter of the Institute, he virtually ordered the Brothers, “in consideration of the far-reaching changes which modern times have made in educational programs” and “in view of the larger participation of all classes in society in all kinds of studies,” to begin teaching the Classics to young men from all walks of life, “even in behalf of the well-to-do classes.”<sup>86</sup> This is a significant statement—the Brothers were now to teach Latin and Greek to young men not only from the lower and middle classes but also from the upper class. What position could be farther removed from the spirit and letter of the *Mémoire*, not to say the original purpose of the Institute?

Reflecting on the pope’s letter more than twenty-five years later, the renowned French philosopher Jacques Maritain told the Brothers at Manhattan College (New York) during an academic convocation that the American Brothers had succeeded brilliantly in doing something that had been impossible to achieve in Europe—bringing together the school for the poor and the teaching of the Classics, or liberal arts, and thereby finally making available “to young people from all walks of life” the full richness and splendor of the “cultural and intellectual heritage of mankind.” Heaping praise on the Brothers in the United States for pioneering the idea of “liberal education for all,” Maritain boldly and generously declared that just as De La Salle had been an educational innovator in the seventeenth century, they had performed a similar role in the twentieth.<sup>87</sup>

History had come full circle—the Brothers in the Bronx who sat listening to Maritain’s address wore not only a dignified (if now conventional) habit but also the colorful hood and black, triple-striped doctoral robe of the university from which they had received their advanced degree. In some cases these learned professors taught their students Latin and Greek. It would be wrong to assume that because of their learning and erudition, their decorum and dignity, these professors were any less devoted, holy, or spiritual than the Brothers of the seventeenth century who helped De La Salle found the Institute.

86. Quoted in Battersby, *The Christian Brothers in the United States, 1900–1925*, 354.

87. Quoted in *ibid.*, 358–59.

In the history of the Institute, the idea of providing a liberal arts education on the secondary and the university level to all classes, including the poor, may be regarded one day as equal in significance to the original founding of a Community of consecrated lay teachers. At least in the United States, where elementary schools are in the minority among Lasallian institutions, the Lasallian colleges and universities might have the best chance of not only surviving but also prospering in the future. In the present moment, might not the Institute and the Lasallian movement need a new *Mémoire* to outline a theology of the Lasallian higher education ministry with the same clear thinking that De La Salle displayed in his day when he boldly outlined the charter of a new Community of consecrated lay teachers dedicated to elementary education of the poor?





# Memorandum

1. Whether it is appropriate to change or to keep the habit that the Brothers of the Community of the Christian Schools are currently wearing. What this Community is and who compose it.

2. This Community is commonly called the Community of the Christian Schools and at present rests upon—indeed, is rooted in—Providence alone. Those who live in it follow a Rule and are dependent for everything, having no personal possessions, and treat one another as equals.

3. The members of this Community devote themselves to teaching in tuition-free schools, in towns only, and to giving basic religious instruction<sup>1</sup> every day, including Sundays and holidays.

4. Provision is also made for training schoolmasters for rural districts in a house, separate from the Community, that we call a normal school.<sup>2</sup> Those who are trained there remain for only a few years, until they are well prepared in religious spirit as well as for their work.

5. They dress just like ordinary secular people except for the black, or at least dark brown, color of their clothing, and they cannot be

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1. The word *catechism*, which De La Salle employs here to mean the religion lesson in school, is not used as much today.

2. The term De La Salle uses in the manuscript is *seminary*, but the reference is clearly to the teacher training college, the first of its kind, that he established in Reims in 1687. As he makes clear in his *Mémoire*, the first Brothers are teaching only in cities or towns, where parishes or municipalities can afford to support a community of at least two members. Not wanting to refuse the requests of rural pastors for schoolmasters, De La Salle decides to establish a normal school to train religiously minded lay teachers for posts in the countryside, where they will have to rely on themselves.

distinguished from them except by the split white collar<sup>3</sup> they wear and their close-cropped hair.<sup>4</sup>

6. They are taught to become proficient in singing, reading, and writing. Their room, board, and laundry are all free. In due course, they are placed in a hamlet or a village as a parish assistant. Having secured a position, they maintain no further contact with the Community except for what is appropriate and courteous. However, they are welcomed back for a periodic retreat.

7. In this Community we also provide training for young boys who possess basic intelligence and some religious disposition.<sup>5</sup> When we judge them suitable and they themselves apply for admission, we accept them into the Community from the age of fourteen and over. We introduce them to the practice of interior prayer and other religious observances. We also instruct them in religious doctrine and teach them to read and write competently.

8. The young men who are formed and trained in this Community live in a separate house with their own oratory, schedule, meals, and recreation periods. Their religious observances are different<sup>6</sup> and adapted to their level of mental development and to the needs of their future work.

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3. The word in French is *rabat*, in Latin, *rabato*. This long, split collar is still worn on occasion by Anglican and Episcopalian priests and by some Protestant ministers, as well as by English barristers and judges.

4. Adrian Nyel, a lay teacher who worked with De La Salle in the early stages of establishing the Christian Schools, wore this kind of attire. A rolling stone type of man, Nyel could not remain in one place for long. Nonetheless, he was a gifted teacher and organizer. Although he never formally joined the new Community, Nyel remained on friendly terms with De La Salle. He died in 1687. In a certain sense, he is a prototype of the rural schoolmaster De La Salle means to train in his normal school, that is to say, a devoted layman who does not belong to any religious congregation and lives a dedicated life.

5. The term for the school in which these young men in their early teens were trained is *juniorate* or *junior novitiate*. The first one was established in Reims in the mid-1680s, moved to Paris in 1688, but discontinued in 1691. Junior novices did not wear any distinctive religious garb, although their hair was cut shorter than that of other students and they followed a daily schedule of religious observances. The Institute did not bring back a house of formation for high school students until 1835; however, it closed most of them in the late 1960s, after Vatican Council II.

6. That is, different than the religious exercises of the Brothers.

9. Those who make up this Community are all laymen without a classical education and possessing but average intelligence.<sup>7</sup> As God would have it, some of those who joined after either receiving the tonsure<sup>8</sup> or studying [Latin and Greek]<sup>9</sup> did not remain.

10. However, we will not refuse admission to young men who have studied, but we will accept them only on condition that they never again pursue advanced studies—first, because such knowledge is unnecessary for them; second, because it might subsequently lure them away from their state in life, and third, because community observances and classroom work require their total commitment.

### 11. What kind of habit do we wear in this Community?

The habit of this Community is a kind of shortened cassock<sup>10</sup> that reaches to the calf of the leg.<sup>11</sup> It is without buttons and is fastened on

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7. Battersby's translation of this line is somewhat different: "Those who compose this community are all laymen, without classical studies, and of little culture" (See *De La Salle; Letters and Documents*, 242.) The Institute historian Georges Rigault states that De La Salle crossed out this line, perhaps because he deemed it, on second thought, too strong. (See *Histoire Générale de l'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes*, 1, 161.) Battersby suggests, on the grounds that the ink is different than that used by De La Salle, that someone else deleted the line. Nonetheless, he places it in a footnote rather than in the text itself. (See *De La Salle; Letters and Documents*, 242). In his critical edition of the *Mémoire*, Hermans suggests that another hand, perhaps that of an offended later reader, crossed out the passage, which does seem for several good reasons to be integral to the text. The line describes those who compose the Community, which is the intention of this section of the *Mémoire*, helps to make intelligible the following lines that explain why some well-educated candidates ended up leaving the Community, and fits in with the unflattering remarks about the mental abilities of the first Brothers found in other sections of the document. I have therefore decided to place the line in the text. (See *Cahiers lasalliens* 5, 287.)

8. The tonsure consists of shaving off the hair on top of a candidate's head at the time of entering into the clerical or monastic state.

9. I have inserted the term "Latin and Greek" in brackets because 1) a liberal arts education at that time consisted mainly of studying these two languages, 2) some of the early members of the Community were former seminarians, and 3) the study of Latin and Greek would foment a painful controversy in the Institute late in the nineteenth century.

10. The French term *soutane* is sometimes used in English.

11. The Brothers first wore this habit in Reims, in 1684, when they began calling themselves Brothers and following a Rule. De La Salle assembled the various parts of the habit at their request. It evolved in the following fashion:

the inside with little black hooks<sup>12</sup> from the collar to just below the waist. From there downward it is sewn. The sleeves reach to the wrists, and the tips are fastened with concealed hooks.

12. We call this habit a robe to distinguish it from a clerical cassock, from which it differs slightly in shape.

13. A cloak or a peasant's overcoat,<sup>13</sup> without a collar and without buttons in front, serves as a mantle. It is fastened at the neck with a large hook on the inside. Rather long, this cloak reaches an inch or so below the robe, completely covering it.

14. The cloaks or overcoats that the Brothers of the Christian Schools wear were given to them to guard against the cold before they adopted the distinctive short cassock they now have and when they were outfitted with a pocketless but serviceable jacket.<sup>14</sup>

15. At that time, cloaks were widely worn, and we judged them to be proper, useful, and comfortable attire for schoolmasters, particularly those who must leave their community residence and go to schools in distant districts for the convenience of their students. Besides wearing this cloak as a mantle in the streets, these masters used it in winter as an indoors coat when they reached their school or community residence.

16. There was considerable hesitation at the time as to whether we should give them mantles<sup>15</sup> in preference to these peasant overcoats, which in the future, we realized, would come to be regarded as a distinctive sort of attire.

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first, the split white collar or *rabat* and the dark jacket (which they later discarded); second, the peasant overcoat, or *capote*; third, the shortened cassock, called a *robe*; finally, a large-brimmed black hat. The introduction of this present work more amply describes this complete habit.

12. The hooks are held in place by eyes.

13. The French word is *capote*. The overcoat worn by the Brothers is an adaptation of what peasants of the Champagne region wore at that time.

14. This jacket is called a *jerkin* or a *tunic*. In Reims in 1681, before they called themselves Brothers or followed a Rule, De La Salle's first schoolmasters wore this attire along with a *rabat*, the common clothing of schoolteachers of the day.

15. The context in the *Mémoire* shows that this mantle is a type of clerical dress; number 17 in the manuscript makes this connection explicit.

17. But four considerations settled the matter. In the first place, mantles would not guard against the cold in classrooms and would get in the way. Second, we feared that with these short mantles, the masters might take on the airs of court clergy<sup>16</sup> if they looked outwardly just like them. Third, dressed according to current fashion, they would appear to be members of the clergy when they are nothing of the sort. Fourth, they might abscond with the mantle, as well as the jacket, as soon as the thought crossed their mind, returning home dressed like a gentleman although they had brought with them only the clothes of a peasant or a poor laborer.

18. These various drawbacks led to the conclusion that it would be better for them to use a habit that is neither clerical nor secular.

**19. The disadvantage of changing this habit. The question of change in general.**

20. There are few changes that are not harmful to a Community, particularly in matters that might be the least bit important.

21. Changes are always a mark of vacillation and of little stability; however, constancy in practices, customs, and points of Rule appears to be one of the mainstays of community life.

22. One change within a Community opens the door to others and ordinarily leaves an unfavorable impression on the mind of all, or at least some, members.

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16. According to Battersby, the phrase used in the manuscript is *ces abbez incubes*. The word *incubes*, he says, has been crossed out and written again, not very clearly, above. (See *De La Salle; Letters and Documents*, 245.) In English the word *incubus* refers to an evil spirit or demon, or at least the spectre of one. In his edition of the text, Hermans does not include the word but indicates in a marginal comment that the word *incurtis*, rather than *incubes*, has been crossed out, and another, indecipherable, one put in its place. (See *Cahiers lasalliens* 5, 289.) The French text in *Œuvres Complètes* (54) gives the phrase as *abbés de cour*. The reference to the court is supported by a comment Bédel makes about the Hermans transcription (*An Introduction to the History of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools: The Origins, 1651–1726*, 78). Rigault also claims that an indecipherable word has been crossed out after *ces abbez*, only to be replaced by one equally indecipherable. But the sense should be, he believes, worldly or frivolous priests. (See *Histoire Générale*, 1, 162.)

23. Most disorders and deviations in a Community arise from admitting changes too readily. Hence, it is a maxim accepted by all who have had some experience with community life that<sup>17</sup>

24. before introducing any change in a Community, it is essential to give much serious thought to the matter and to calculate carefully the good and the evil effects that may result from it. But once a practice has been put into place, it is necessary to be extremely careful not to overturn it except for an unavoidable necessity.

25. It is apparent that the Reverend Jesuit Fathers have observed this practice.<sup>18</sup> After the death of Saint Ignatius,<sup>19</sup> when they encountered some difficulty in observing their Constitutions, they discussed the situation at their first General Chapter, seeking some kind of remedy. Finally, they unanimously decided not to change any point but simply to clarify any murky question by adding marginal notes of explanation.

**26. Objections to this habit in particular.**

27. Changing the religious habit is a matter of importance in a Community; hence, most religious communities take great care to avoid all circumstances that might lead to its alteration. In several communities the habit is prescribed not only as to its shape and the quality of the material but also with respect to its length and breadth. All the dimensions are exactly indicated so that the habit will never be altered. The communities of religious priests<sup>20</sup> that adopted at their foundation

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17. In the numbering of the original French manuscript, the sentence in number 23 continues in number 24.

18. Of all the paragraphs of the *Mémoire*, this is one of the most rambling and wordy. I have split up the sentences, added punctuation, compressed the language, and changed the first line somewhat. Here is the more literal translation by Battersby of the paragraph as one long, complicated sentence: "It is apparently for these reasons that the Reverend Jesuit Fathers, when they encountered some difficulty in their Constitutions after the death of St. Ignatius, after discussing the matter in their first General Chapter to see what could be done to remedy it, unanimously decided that no change should be made with respect to any point, but, for the purpose of elucidating the question which was causing difficulty, a marginal note should be added by way of explanation" (*De La Salle; Letters and Documents*, 249).

19. Saint Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556), a former Spanish soldier, founded the Society of Jesus.

20. De La Salle uses the term *communautés régulières*, meaning in this context the religious orders of priests who make solemn vows.

the clothing then in fashion among other clerics have steadfastly retained the original habit and have thereby ended up making it distinctive.<sup>21</sup>

28. For the past five years, this habit has been worn in five different towns, both in the diocese of Reims and in that of Laon.<sup>22</sup>

29. There it is regarded as a decent and appropriate habit designed both to keep the teachers true to the diligence and reserve proper to their state and profession and to invite the respect of their students and the esteem of other people, far more than the jacket they formerly wore.

30. People have grown accustomed to this habit, and changing it now would give rise to gossip, invite criticism for being faddish and frivolous, and induce superiors to bring back secular dress.

31. The Brothers of the Christian Schools have been teaching in Paris for nearly two years in this same habit, and during that time no one has lodged any complaints about it except the parish priest of Saint Sulpice,<sup>23</sup> who recently has spoken rather strongly on the matter.

32. If this habit were objectionable, this should have been pointed out, it would seem, when the Brothers of the Christian Schools came to Paris and before they were employed in the schools there. They should have been told then that they would not be permitted to teach in this distinctive habit and that they would have to adopt one more commonly used. Then they would have had to decide what measures to take.

### **33. Reasons for adopting a distinctive habit and for keeping it.**

34. In every Community where the members share all their goods and live a common life, as in that of the Christian Schools, the habit either is distinctive from its foundation or becomes so eventually.

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21. That is, with the passage of time.

22. The two adjoining dioceses in northeastern France where the Brothers first opened Christian Schools.

23. Father Henri Baudrand de La Combe (1637–1699). See the introduction for a short biography of Baudrand and an explanation of his objections to the Brothers' religious habit.

35. It seems more suitable for the welfare of a Community that the habit be distinctive from its foundation rather than become so later. It will then be more difficult to change it, and a permanently distinctive habit will remove every chance of adopting the worldly fashions of ordinary people.

36. The members of this Community, being for the most part rough, unrefined, and uneducated men who ordinarily respond to feelings and impressions, need some tangible token of membership in the Community to draw them to it, to retain their allegiance once they join, and to lead them to observe its Rule.

37. Nothing is more effective in achieving these ends than a distinctive habit, which can be the hallmark of a Community whose custom it may be to wear one.

38. Monsieur Vincent<sup>24</sup> judged that a distinctive habit was essential, in a sense, to hold the allegiance of the members of his congregation. With how much more reason does this seem necessary in a Community whose members lack any formal education or enlightenment!

39. For most of those entering the Community, having a distinctive habit effectively removes any concern about its stability and endowment.<sup>25</sup>

40. This distinctive habit encourages laypeople to look upon those who belong to this Community as persons separated and withdrawn from worldly concerns. It seems appropriate that they have this notion about them so that the members themselves will not mingle too freely or converse too frequently with secular people and will maintain more reserve in their relations with them.

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24. Saint Vincent de Paul (c. 1580–1660) founded the Sisters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission (the Vincentian Fathers and Brothers). The French used the term *Monsieur* (Mister) rather than *Père* (Father) when referring to diocesan priests. A pastor was often called *Abbé*, although this title was given sometimes to a diocesan priest who was not a pastor. A religious order priest was called *Père*.

25. On the advice of Père Nicolas Barré, a monk of the Order of Minims, De La Salle had decided not to use his family inheritance to endow his new Community but to rely instead on Providence. During a famine in 1684, he gave away, day by day, most of his fortune to feed the starving.



41. Before the adoption of this special habit, whenever the obligation to observe the Rule was brought up, several said that they had no more reason to do so than ordinary people because they appeared to be no different from them.

42. Since the adoption of this distinctive garb, it does not seem that anyone has raised any trouble on this score, for all regard themselves as belonging to a Community.

43. Before the adoption of this special habit, those applying for admission to this Community regarded it merely as an employment agency for schoolmasters or servants and had no idea of joining a religious community. Several came to be trained so that they could earn a living afterward. Some asked for a salary, and others thought we ought to be grateful for their conforming to our way of life and manner of dress.

44. Since the adoption of this habit, no one has applied for admission with any thought other than of joining a Community and remaining in it for the rest of his life. Salaries are unheard of, and acceptance is regarded as a great honor. The habit alone produces these results.

45. Before the adoption of this habit, most of those who left the Community took away with them the clothing they had received. Now the habit helps to restrain the Brothers in their temptations. Some of them have even admitted that several times they had considered leaving and would have done so had it not been for the habit.

**46. Objections to wearing the ecclesiastical habit.**

47. 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 church.

48. We cannot expect that their excellencies the bishops who have or may have them in their diocese will accept and tolerate persons of this sort wearing clerical garb.

49. It does not seem possible that the head of this Community could give a satisfactory answer when asked why, on his own authority, he

had given clerical garb to persons not of that calling. How could he justify his action?

50. There has been some talk of making them receive the tonsure, but a number of persons, including Monsieur Baudrand,<sup>26</sup> disagree with this notion. It is certainly difficult to believe that our lord bishops would agree to tonsure men who have never begun, and never will begin, classical studies and who never will exercise any function in the church. Yet that is what people propose for members of this Community.

51. It seems important to distinguish the members of this Community from clerics by their habit.

52. They are in the parish churches every day, and their schools are usually located nearby. They take their students to these churches to attend holy Mass and the Divine Office.<sup>27</sup>

53. Parish priests would not be satisfied with their wearing a long mantle but would insist that they also put on a surplice, and they would make use of the Brothers in religious services, at least when they needed their help.

54. This situation would happen frequently because there are few priests in most urban parishes; often there is only the pastor and, at most, one assistant.

55. The schoolmasters would feel honored to wear the surplice in the parishes, to rank with the clergy, and to take part in church services.

56. As a consequence, they would readily abandon the care of their students in church, the only reason they go there and an onerous responsibility.

57. The observations contained herein are all based on experience at Saint Jacques, Laon, and Château-Porcien.<sup>28</sup>

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26. This pastor of Saint Sulpice objected to the Brothers' distinctive habit.

27. The Rule of 1705 (chapter 28, article 9) specifies that the Brothers bring their pupils to Vespers in the parish church on Sundays and feasts.

28. At the school of Saint Jacques in Reims and those in the outlying towns of Laon and Château-Porcien, the pastor had induced the Brothers to take part in church services, much to De La Salle's displeasure.

58. If the Brothers of this Community wore clerical garb, they might be easily tempted to begin classical studies, to be tonsured, to receive Holy Orders, and to seek a position in the parishes.

59. They would freely communicate and make friends with parish priests and other clerics, seeing them every day. As a result, this too frequent interaction could raise many temptations against their vocation and cause them to be less diligent in their school duties.

60. The long mantle would get in the way of their work.

61. With this garb, they could not easily move among their students, line them up, or keep them in order when they escort them to the parish church and remain with them there.

62. People have mentioned that with this mantle there is a danger of knocking over most of the small children on one side or the other while trying to place them in order.

63. In most towns we will have to staff schools in various districts where the teachers must remain every day for three and a half hours in the morning and as long in the afternoon.

64. In these schools in winter, they will require other clothes than their normal attire to guard against the cold. A long mantle would be of no use for this purpose, whereas their peasants' overcoat can serve as an indoors coat in their schools.



# Rules I Have Imposed on Myself

Translated, edited, and introduced  
by Ronald Isetti



# Introduction

De La Salle's *Memorandum on the Habit* and his *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself* are concerned with quite different matters—in the first instance, with retaining a unique religious garb; in the second, with achieving personal wholeness and salvation by submitting the self to a spiritual practice. Yet, there are more similarities between these documents than may first meet the eye.

Both texts clearly show that De La Salle regards the founding and governance of the Community of the Christian Schools as the work of God and that he makes no distinction, either for himself or for his Brothers, between performing daily duties and securing their salvation. More significantly, these documents reveal his practical mentality and the methodical manner in which he not only marshals arguments in favor of the Brothers' habit but also shapes and structures his own life, even to the point of making marks on a piece of paper to keep track of how many pious acts he has performed on a given day.

De La Salle's intention in submitting to a daily spiritual practice is not to acquire specific virtues one at a time, as Benjamin Franklin once attempted to do by using a similar accounting method.<sup>1</sup> As D. H. Lawrence notes in his famous criticism of Franklin, this impossible, not to say arrogant, task, which is not the least bit appealing,<sup>2</sup> turns a human into an automaton and the acquisition of virtue into a silly and even proud calculation of progress. De La Salle probably realizes as much, for he is a humble man, fully aware of his own failings and of the impossibility of ever becoming perfect.

Although De La Salle's methodical lifestyle does not immediately appeal to modern sensibilities, we would make a serious mistake if we dismissed *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself* either as an exercise in legalism from the dry-as-dust mind of a punctilious barrister or as a

1. See *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Walter J. Black, 1941), 128–38.

2. See “Benjamin Franklin,” in *Studies in Classic American Literature* (New York: Viking, 1966), 9–21.

formalistic example of seventeenth-century French spirituality. This comment is not to deny that De La Salle is orderly and practical-minded, far more than most people today, or that he has the mind and heart of a lawyer rather than of a poet. We do well to recall that attempting to observe a Rule perfectly, whether that of his Community or the one he is setting down for himself, is De La Salle's way of expressing a genuine love for and deep devotion to God—not only in the big things of life but also in the little ones, not only during times of prayer but also during the most mundane moments.<sup>3</sup>

De La Salle is much more concerned with channeling his thoughts and energy toward the Divine than with strengthening his will or subjecting his natural passions, although he is surely striving to achieve both these results. It would be foolish to deny or downplay this ascetical side of his personality. He chooses the various disciplines to which he submits himself primarily to keep him attuned to God throughout the day. De La Salle seeks through his various prayers, acts of devotion, visits, and meditations to achieve what the Buddhist tradition calls *mindfulness*—a centered heart open to the present moment as a revelation of God's presence in all things and in all places. The ultimate purpose of De La Salle's seemingly mechanical spirituality is to keep focused on and attentive to what is most important in life.

Every great religious figure, whether Christian, Buddhist, or Hindu, has discovered that it is impossible to make progress in the spiritual life without a practice. In the final analysis, religion is not merely a matter of ritual, morality, or dogma but of interior spiritual transformation. This transformation cannot be achieved simply by good intentions, casual prayers, or faithful attendance at Sunday services; it comes through discipline, practiced each day and throughout each day. Perhaps this is why so many modern spiritual writers suggest getting up an hour earlier to make time for spiritual reading, yoga, and meditation; pausing several times a day to close the eyes and breathe deeply; using the delay at a traffic light to slow down and clear the mind; not responding to another person in conversation without first drawing in a deep breath; and drastically reducing the amount of daily mental activity by periodically remembering to live in the present moment, not clinging to the past or fretting about the future.

Regular daily practices of sitting in a quiet place for recollection, reviewing the day just before going to sleep, slowing down bodily movements—even handwriting, speech, and walking—and frequently remembering to experience life consciously, one moment at a time,

3. I am grateful to Edwin Bannon for this idea.



are all commendable practices that echo today what De La Salle is trying to achieve in his own time and place.

That he anticipates much of today's spirituality of "living in the moment" can be glimpsed in this beautiful advice on trusting in God, paraphrased from De La Salle's writings by an anonymous author:

Stir up your trust in God's infinite goodness and honor him by leaving in his hands the care of your persons. Be not troubled about the present or disquieted about the future, but be concerned only about the moment you must now live. Do not let anticipation of tomorrow be a burden on the day that is passing. What you lack in the evening the morrow will bring if you know how to hope in God.<sup>4</sup>

At first thought, some of De La Salle's ideas about accepting responsibility for the faults of others and blame for their failings may not seem psychologically healthy. After all, each of us is responsible for his own actions, and there is nothing wrong with assigning blame where it properly belongs. Still, there is wisdom in much of what De La Salle says, if interpreted correctly. We all share in one another's successes and failures, and we should be willing to bear one another's burdens and to admit responsibility for everyone and everything in a larger spiritual sense. When counselors are sometimes responsible for not giving the right advice or for overlooking problems, they should admit as much. Not wanting to defend ourselves when unjustly accused, not caring about what other people may think of us, or not needing always to be right in an argument can be liberating experiences. Overcoming the ego and thereby becoming free are the objectives of most spiritual discipline.

If we were to regard De La Salle's rules as a way to destroy personal autonomy or to avoid thinking and choosing (and therefore making any mistake), we would be hard pressed to understand how modern-day Lasallians could find any inspiration in them. There is a positive way of looking at these rules. Granted that some of the specific practices De La Salle imposes on himself are dated and not appropriate for Lasallians today; nonetheless, the principle behind these rules remains valid: spiritual development depends on discipline. Perhaps the *Rules I Have Imposed on Myself* can encourage modern disciples of Saint John Baptist de La Salle to develop their own daily spiritual practices attuned to modern life and spirituality. This is the challenge De La Salle offers us.

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4. The source is a Lasallian prayer card in the writer's possession.



# Rules I Have Imposed on Myself

1.<sup>1</sup> I will not leave the house without necessity and without spending a quarter of an hour considering before God whether the need is real or only imaginary. If it is urgent, I will take the time of a *Miserere*<sup>2</sup> for that purpose and to put myself in the proper frame of mind.

2. I will take a quarter of an hour every day to renew my consecration to the Most Holy Trinity.

3. 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. We must try to keep this precept ever in mind.<sup>3</sup>

4. When I pay anyone a visit, I will be careful to say only what I must and not chat about what is going on in the world or engage in any small talk. I will not stay there any longer than a half hour, at most.

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1. Blain quotes these rules in book 4 (*Cahiers lasalliens* 8, 318–19); see also, *Ceuvres complètes*, 61–63, and *The Mind and Heart of John Baptist de La Salle*, 240–42.

2. The *Miserere* is the Latin title of Psalm 51, which begins, “Have mercy on me, O God”; the Psalm takes but a few minutes to recite.

3. Among the twenty statements in this text, rule three and rule fourteen are the only ones that De La Salle does not write in the first person singular. Rule three also appears as point four in “Reflections on Their State and Employment That the Brothers Should Make from Time to Time, Especially During Retreat,” *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, 78.

5. At least twenty times a day, I will unite my actions with those of our Lord and try to make his perspective and intentions my own.<sup>4</sup> To keep myself on track, I will pierce a small piece of paper as often as I perform this act. For as many times as I fail to observe this practice each day, I will say the *Pater Noster*,<sup>5</sup> kissing the floor after each one, before I go to bed.

6. When my Brothers come to me for advice, I will ask our Lord himself to give it to them. If the matter is serious, I will take a moment to pray about it. At least I will try to keep myself recollected during the interview while lifting my heart to God.

7. When they tell me their faults, I will hold myself blameworthy before God for my failure to prevent their occurrence, whether because of the advice I gave them or for not being attentive to them. If I impose a penance on them, I will inflict a greater one on myself. If the fault is serious, I will in addition to the penance spend some time in private, perhaps a half-hour or even an hour, for several days afterward, especially at night, to ask for God's forgiveness. If I consider that I am holding our Lord's place in their regard, this ought to be with the understanding that I must bear their sins as our Lord has borne ours. God has given me this kind of responsibility for them.

8. 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*.<sup>6</sup>

9. I must frequently remind myself that I am only an instrument, which has no value except in the hands of the Master Craftsman. For

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4. De La Salle urges his Brothers to do the same in "Reflections" but without urging them to puncture a piece of paper several times a day. See *Collection*, no. 7, 78.

5. De La Salle includes Latin prayers in his *Instructions and Exercises of Piety for the Christian Schools*. Latin prayers and responses during Mass were the norm in his time, even though the Rule forbade the Brothers to teach the Latin language.

6. Habakkuk 3:2. The verse in the New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition reads: "I stand in awe, O Lord, of your work."

this reason I must wait for the promptings of Providence before I act but not allow them to slip by once I perceive them.

10. In whatever circumstance I find myself, I will always follow a plan and a daily schedule,<sup>7</sup> relying only on the grace of God, in which I place full trust, to carry them out because I have never been able to accomplish this on my own. As my situation changes, I will adjust my plan and daily schedule. To make sure this happens, I will spend a day in retreat.

11. When I have to go into the countryside, I will spend a day in prayer and reflection to prepare myself and will firmly resolve to spend three hours daily at interior prayer during my trip.

12. When anyone, whether a superior or someone else, causes me pain and from a purely human point of view offends me in some way, I will be careful not to say a word. If someone asks me about it, I will excuse the persons who offended me and make it clear that they were right in doing what they did.

13. I must keep an accurate account of the time I have squandered and be careful not to do so again.<sup>8</sup> Only constant watchfulness can ensure this; furthermore, only a long retreat will enable me to acquire this vigilance.

14. It is a good rule to worry less about knowing what ought to be done than about doing perfectly what is already known.<sup>9</sup>

15. Every morning I will devote fifteen minutes to prepare myself for the coming day, foreseeing the business I must attend to, so that I can act prudently, and anticipating the occasions when I might commit any faults, so that I can sidestep them. Thus I will be able to spend my day well.

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7. See "Regarding the Use of Time," *Collection*, 79, no. 1; 80, no. 4.

8. See *ibid.*, 80, no. 4. In his own rules, De La Salle normally uses imperative language; with his Brothers he usually asks them a question—to wit, have they been wasting time by not doing things in proper order?

9. See *ibid.*, 80, no. 9. In urging his Brothers to reflect on their use of time, De La Salle amplifies this point: "Do not be concerned so much about knowing how to do a thing perfectly as about doing it as perfectly as you can, for by doing it as well as you know how, you deserve to learn and to understand what you would not otherwise know."

16. In the past I have often neglected to say the rosary, even though it is a prescribed prayer in our Community. From now on, I must not go to bed without having said it.

17. In addition, I will never let a day go by, unless I am traveling in the country, without visiting the Most Blessed Sacrament. Even on the road, if I can pass near a village church, I will enter and kneel down to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament. I will do this as often as the opportunity arises.

18. I will make it a point to raise my heart to God whenever I begin some new activity. Whatever I undertake will begin with a prayer.

19. The Rule of our Community is not to enter the house or any room in it without saying a prayer to God and fastening our thoughts on him. I will make certain not to neglect this practice.

20. Once every day, I will recite the *Pater Noster*, with as much devotion, attention, and faith as I can summon, out of respect for our Lord, who taught us this prayer and instructed us to say it.

# Other Personal Documents

## The Heroic Vow

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, we consecrate ourselves entirely to you to procure with all our efforts the establishment of the Society of the Christian Schools in the manner which will seem to us most agreeable to you and most advantageous to the said Society.

And for this purpose, I, John Baptist de La Salle, priest; I, Nicolas Vuyart, and I, Gabriel Drolin, from now on and forever, until the last surviving one of us or unto the complete establishment of the said Society, make the vow of association and union to bring about and maintain the said establishment, without being able to withdraw from this obligation even if only we three remained in the said Society and if we were obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone.

In view of which, we promise to do, all together and by common accord, everything that we shall think in conscience and regardless of any human consideration to be for the greater good of the said Society.

Done on this twenty-first day of November, feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, 1691. In testimony of which we have signed.<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Œuvres complètes*, 61; Cahiers lasalliens 10 (Rome, 1979), 116; Blain, *Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, book 2, chap. 10, 289–90.

## Formula of Vows

Most Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, prostrate with the most profound respect before your infinite and adorable majesty, 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, John Baptist de La Salle, priest, promise and vow to unite myself and to remain in Society with Brothers Nicolas Vuyart, Gabriel Drolin, Jean Partois, Gabriel Charles Rasigade, Jean Henry, Jacques Compain, Jean Jacquot, Jean Louis de Marcheville, Michel Barthélemy Jacquinot, Edme Leguillon, Gilles Pierre and Claude Roussel to keep together and by association gratuitous schools wherever they may be, even if I were obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone, and to do anything in the said Society at which I will be employed, whether by the body of the Society or by the superiors who will have the government thereof.

Wherefore, I promise and vow obedience to the body of the Society as well as to the superiors, which vows of association as well as of stability in the said Society and of obedience I promise to keep inviolably all my life.

In testimony of which I have signed. Done at Vaugirard on this sixth day of June, feast of the Most Holy Trinity, 1694.<sup>2</sup>

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2. *Œuvres complètes*, 61; Cahiers lasalliens 2 (Rome, 1960), 42.



## Testament

First, I recommend my soul to God and, next, all the Brothers of the Society of the Christian Schools with whom he has associated me. I urge them, above all else, always to show entire submission to the Church, especially in these evil times, and to give proof of this by never separating themselves in anything from our Holy Father the Pope and from the Church of Rome, always remembering that I sent two Brothers to Rome to ask God for the grace that their Society might always be entirely submissive thereto. I also recommend to them to have a great devotion to our Lord, to love very much Holy Communion and the exercise of interior prayer, to cultivate a very special devotion toward the most Blessed Virgin and toward Saint Joseph, the Patron and Protector of their Society, to fulfill the duties of their employment with zeal and disinterestedness, and to maintain close union among themselves and blind obedience to their superiors, which is the foundation and the support of all perfection in a community.<sup>3</sup>

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3. *Œuvres complètes*, 63; Cahiers lasalliens 10 (Rome, 1979), 118; Blain, *Life of John Baptist de La Salle*, book 3, chap. 18, 737; letter from Brother Barthélemy (Rouen, 13 April 1719) to Brother Gabriel Drolin, *Letters*, 32(B).



# Rule of the Brother Director of a House of the Institute<sup>1</sup>

The Brother in charge of an individual house of the Institute will not be called Superior but will be called Director of that house, and he will not allow himself to be called otherwise; the one who takes his place during his absence will be called Sub-Director. The name Director is given to the Brother Director of each house of the Institute to let him know that his whole care ought to be to direct everything that concerns his house and the schools dependent on it in accord with the guidance and authority of the Brother Superior of the Institute, to direct the interior life of the Brothers who are under his guidance by the direction of their conscience, to help them advance in virtue, and to lead them to the perfection of their state and of their Institute. He is called Brother Director to let him know that he has been appointed only to direct under the guidance and authority of the Brother Superior of the Institute and not to guide and govern as the head or to have and attribute to himself anything but a relative and dependent authority.

The Brother Director of each house will be dependent on the Brother Superior of the Institute, and he will do nothing out of the

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1. The Rule of the Brother Director was written by De La Salle probably much earlier than 1718. The earliest extant manuscript, 1718, is in the form of a document signed by Brother Superior Barthélemy and sent to the Directors of the communities at that time. Only one copy, to the Director of Saint-Denis, has survived; it is in the Generalate Archives in Rome. In 1734, the Rule of the Brother Director was printed separately in a small leaflet; during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it became part of the Rule of Government, with separate chapters on the Brothers' clothing and food toward the beginning and one on the Brother Director following chapters on the other administrators of the Institute. The 1718 manuscript is presented in *Cahiers lasalliens* 25 (Rome, 1965), 154–62, and in *Œuvres complètes* (Rome, 1993), 43–50.

ordinary except by his order and nothing at all except with submission in his regard.

He will have no power to make regulations or to guide and carry out anything by himself except according to what is written. He will submit to the Brother Superior of the Institute everything he may have to do that is not written and do nothing of this sort without his order and permission in writing. If something is absolutely necessary and he is unable to refer the matter to the Brother Superior, he will examine before God, for the space of half a quarter hour, whether the situation is of this nature. If it appears to be such, he will consult with the Brother or the Brothers who have been given to him as advisers by the Brother Superior of the Institute. He will then do what he believes before God to be the most appropriate and subsequently notify the Brother Superior of the Institute of what he has done and also of the advice given to him by the Brother or Brothers whom he consulted.

He will not give any unusual permission to any Brother, not even to copy anything whatsoever, without a written order of the Brother Superior of the Institute, unless the matter is necessary and he cannot wait for the order of the Brother Superior before doing it. He will give an account to the Brother Superior of the Institute of all the permissions he has given during the month and to whom.

He will not govern daily practices except by what is written and by the written order of the Brother Superior of the Institute, never by what others tell him about what has been practiced or not practiced previously that another Director permitted, did, or allowed in such and such a matter. He will not respond to this type of remark, and he will make no changes, but he will notify the Brother Superior of the Institute about it and ask for his advice and orders on the matter. In regard to the Brother who told him that a certain thing was practiced or not practiced previously or that another Director did, allowed, or permitted such and such a thing, he will impose on the one who told him this a penance suitable for a considerable fault, presuming that he said this in the presence of others.

He will not introduce any practice in the house, even under the pretext of piety, without an express written order from the Brother Superior of the Institute, who will not give it until he has examined the matter and the consequences it could have.

He will be very assiduous at all the exercises of the Community, leaving everything at the first sound of the bell to begin the exercise as soon as the bell stops ringing, mindful that this is the first and prin-

cial means of governing his house well and of sanctifying those who are under his guidance.

He will not dispense himself from any exercise, either in whole or in part, without a well-recognized necessity; when he is obliged to be absent from anything, he will notify the Brother Sub-Director.

He will especially not dispense himself from interior prayer, meals, or recreation unless he cannot do otherwise, and he will not allow the doorkeeper to call him during these three exercises unless it appears to him absolutely necessary to do so. If an occasion arises when he has to dispense himself either from interior prayer or from recreation, he will dispense himself from interior prayer rather than from recreation, and he will take another time during the rest of the day to make his interior prayer, without failing to do so.

He will not speak outside the time of recreation unless it is necessary; he will always speak in a low voice and keep silence exactly at all times. He will never speak to any individual Brother who comes before him during the accusation or the advertisement of defects unless it is a pressing necessity and then in few words; he will never speak after evening prayer and the bell for retiring unless it is on some extraordinary occasion, such as a sudden illness or at the approach of a Brother who is only asking him to take care of his needs.

He will not ask any Brother about anything whatever unless it seems necessary for the good of the house, especially when a Brother comes from outside or has lived in another house of the Institute. He will never ask him what has happened in any house of the Institute, not even in regard to any of the Brothers who are under his guidance. He will never allow anyone to speak to him about anyone other than those under his guidance or about anything whatever about them except if it is since the time they have been under his direction. In case he needs to know something about them, he will ask the Brother Superior of the Institute.

He will never leave the house alone for any reason whatever, and when he has to go to other schools while they are in session, he will take one of the older pupils with him; he will do so on this occasion only; every other time he has to go out, he will always take the Brother who has been assigned to go with him.

He will not leave the house without notifying the Sub-Director and telling him at the same time whom he is taking with him. At the end of the month, he will give an account to the Brother Superior of the Institute of all the times he went out during the month and what were the reasons for doing so.

He will not leave the house to make visits or for any other reason that is not necessary, and to make sure that he is not deceiving himself, he will examine the matter before God immediately before going out.

He will make no visits of courtesy except to persons in authority and to principal benefactors. He will not make visits to his relatives, except out of necessity and unless he is unable to do otherwise. Each time he does this, it will be with an order from the Brother Superior General unless the need is so clear and so urgent that he cannot wait for the order of the Brother Superior; in that case he will inform the Brother Superior about it without delay; he will do this also in regard to the other Brothers.

He will not go into the city for any reason whatever without the express order in writing of the Brother Superior of the Institute, and he will show his order to the Brother Sub-Director.

When he can send another Brother either to speak to someone who asks for him or to go out of the house, he will not go himself but will send the Brother.

He will receive no visit during interior prayer or meals, and he will never speak with anyone during this time, except for something that absolutely cannot be deferred and that he cannot foresee or prevent.

He will not allow any girl or woman to enter the house, and he will not speak to any of them in the parlor of the house unless he is accompanied by one of the Brothers.

When the Brother Director has committed some considerable fault, he will ask the Brother Superior of the Institute for a penance.

He will have and show affection and tenderness of heart that are altogether special for all the Brothers who are under his guidance, and he will take care not to harbor any ill-feelings within himself toward any of them and never allow such feelings to appear.

He will not, however, have or form particular friendships with any of the Brothers or with any outside person. He will act the same way toward everyone and never give any Brother whatever any sign of friendship or give anything to one Brother more than to another, however small it may be.

He will maintain such union among the Brothers that he will never allow the least trouble or sign of trouble among them.

He will not allow anything in any of the Brothers that could be contrary to the Rule and the good order of the house for which he is responsible.

He will take seriously any lack, or any appearance of a lack, of observance of the Rule in any small point, desiring that the will of

God, which is given in the Rule and the practices of the Institute, be carried out exactly, fully, and entirely by him as well as by the others whose guidance has been entrusted to him.

For this purpose he will not dispense any Brother from the daily exercises of examen, rosary, spiritual reading, interior prayer, and so on, unless it be for an urgent necessity; if he has been obliged to dispense someone, he will inform the Brother Superior of the Institute about it.

His principal care for the Brothers will be to establish and maintain them in a true spirit of faith and to help them regard doing the will of God in all things as the rule of their conduct.

He will have such great care to preserve obedience in all things that a single moment of delay to carry out what has been asked, a single word of reply, the least resistance, the smallest thing done without permission, will always be regarded by him as faults for which a remedy must be given promptly. The Brothers, for their part, will also obey him in everything as obeying both the Brother Superior of the Institute and God.

Recollection will seem to him of such great importance in itself and with respect to everything else that he will look upon it as the principal exterior support of piety; he will regard a lack of modesty of the eyes as the source of all kinds of disorders in a community.

He will take care similarly that everyone keeps silence in and outside the house; he will take seriously even one word spoken without permission, and he will be concerned that during recreation all strictly observe the rules prescribed for it.

He will assure that the Brothers do not speak along the way when they go together in the city unless it is absolutely necessary and that they say the rosary en route, each one by himself, wherever they are going. When they return, he will have each one give an account of what he said and did while outside.

He will assign to every Brother a day in each week for him to give an account of his conscience, and he will make him render it exactly in all things without failing to conform to the Directory, which he will hold in his hand during this time. He will prefer this care to all the other concerns that he has and to all the other exercises except interior prayer, unless there is an indispensable need that cannot be delayed. If he has not been able to receive the account of someone on the day assigned, he will have him give his account the next day. He will not take the time of spiritual reading for this unless he cannot do otherwise.

On one of the first days of each month, he will give an exact and entire account to the Brother Superior of the Institute concerning the

receipts and expenses in the house for the previous month. Every other month, beginning with October, he will give an account of his conduct, interior as well as exterior, and then of his conduct as Director according to the two directories prepared for this. He will also give an account every other month, beginning with November, regarding the conduct of the schools and of each of the Brothers individually.

In the month in which he gives an account of the conduct of each of the Brothers individually, he will take care that all the Brothers for whom he is responsible write to the Brother Superior of the Institute and give an account of their troubles and of all their conduct, both interior and exterior, in accord with the Directory prepared for this purpose. He will take all these letters, put them with his own, and seal them in the presence of all the Brothers during one of the exercises held in the common room. He will then give this letter to the Brother who has been assigned to him by the Brother Superior of the Institute to post it or to have it posted. When he receives the answers to these letters every other month, he will open the packet in the same manner in the presence of all the Brothers and give each one his letter. If anyone is sick, he will send his letter to him at once by the Brother assigned to deliver the packet each month.

The Brother Director will advise the Brothers that to receive a response to their ordinary letter, they must begin by giving an account of their conscience according to the Directory.

Before the beginning of the school year, he will propose the assignments he thinks ought to be given to the Brothers in the schools, but he will not carry them out until they have been approved or modified by the Brother Superior of the Institute. He will not change any Brother's class during the entire year other than for an urgent necessity, except by the order or permission of the Brother Superior of the Institute, who will indicate to which class he will assign him. If it happens that he is obliged to change anyone, he will immediately write the Brother Superior of the Institute about it, informing him of the necessity that obliged him to make the change, and then he will carry out his order in the matter. At the end of the school year, he will give an account to the Brother Superior of the Institute of every Brother who has been under his guidance during the year, according to the memorandum prepared for this purpose.

Without the order or written permission of the Brother Superior of the Institute, he will not write any letter, no matter how necessary; he will not even write to a Brother or to anyone else at all, except to the Brother who has charge of providing the clothing.



He will always write to the Brother who provides the clothing regarding any errand to take care of the needs of his house. He will not write to any others with whom he has business, to any Brother, or to any other person, much less to any other Brothers, without the order or written permission of the Brother Superior of the Institute.

He will send to the Brother Superior of the Institute all the letters that he writes to the Brother who provides the clothing, and he will never write to him while being in debt.

He will prepare a schedule in writing for the Brother who has charge of the kitchen, indicating to him everything he ought to do during the day and the times he ought to say the rosary and make spiritual reading and evening interior prayer. He will observe that he carries this out and does not speak to any Brother without permission.

At least once a week, on Sunday or on Thursday if it is a holiday all day, he will have the Brother in charge of the kitchen give an account of his use of time and his expenses.

There will be in each house a strongbox with two locks; the Brother Director will have the key to one of the locks, and a Brother assigned for this purpose will have the key to the other lock. This Brother will have as complete a knowledge as the Brother Director of all the receipts and expenses of each month so that one of them can give an account of this to the Brother Superior of the Institute at the beginning of the following month.

He will not lend or borrow anything, go into any debt, or allow any to be made without an express order in writing from the Brother Superior of the Institute; also, he will not lend or borrow any book or allow any Brother to lend, borrow, or read any except those that are in the house.

He will do nothing new or buy anything for the needs of the Brothers except the usual daily requirements and those for the sick, unless they are absolutely necessary and he cannot wait for the next visit or response of the Brother Superior, in which case he will follow what is indicated in article three.

When he has to provide for the vests, rabats, shoes, socks, and other things needed by the Brothers or by the schools for which the Brother Director is charged to provide, he will do this according to the form prescribed in the Society. He will be careful to observe even the smallest detail for himself as well as for the Brothers; he will consider that this exactitude is something God asks of him and for which he will give an account to God.

He will always show personal signs of poverty in his clothes, provided they are respectable, that is, unsoiled, and he will never

wear a hat, mantle, robe, or shoes that are not the same as those of the other Brothers, both in material and in style.

He will have haircuts for all the Brothers on the first day of January, March, May, July, September, and November, or at least on the days preceding or following, without failing in this, and he will take care that they are all the same: all around the head, close cropped on top, thinned out on the sides, and not longer than about three inches over the ears.

He will not get involved by himself alone in any exterior work when this would only be to shut himself off, but he can be involved with some need when all the Brothers are also working on it. He will give an account afterward in the next letter that he writes to the Brother Superior of the Institute of the work that was done, the time it took, and the need for it.

He will take care to keep the house clean, and for this purpose he will assign a Brother to sweep the rooms and keep them tidy. On Sunday, after the community Mass, he will visit or have visited all the rooms of the house to see if anything is lacking, if something is out of place, ought to be elsewhere, or is out of order, and if there are any broken windows or damaged furniture.

He will be attentive and take care that all the candles are extinguished before 9:15, all the doors of the house are always closed, and all the keys are given to him every day after evening prayer. He personally will check the main doors, especially those that lead out to the street, to see if they are securely closed.

### **The Clothing of the Brothers of This Institute**

The Brothers of the Institute will be dressed simply and like poor people, but they will take care that their clothes are clean, respectable, and modest. The material of which their clothes will be made will be ordinary black, coarse, twilled serge, and their stockings will be of the same material.

They will have a robe and a mantle over it, both reaching about six inches from the ground, both lined at the top only, the robe with linen, the mantle with serge.

The robes will be fastened in front by hooks as far as the waist; the remainder will be fastened and sewn to the bottom. The robes and mantles will be without seams in the back.

The robes and mantles will have the same length and width as the body for which they are made; the sleeves will be fastened by hooks without ornament.

The mantles will not have pleats at the top; the sleeves will be extended to two feet off the ground.

The robes and the stockings of the serving Brothers will be brown, like the Capuchin habit, and made in the same way as those of the school Brothers.

They will have breeches of sheepskin, treated with oil, cold-dyed with a violet color, and lined with white sheepskin.

They will also have a serge vest for winter and may have a vest of plain cloth for summer.

The Brothers will also wear, but only in the house and in school, a calotte, lined with wool, that can cover the ears. Those of the serving Brothers will be the color of their robe; those of the school Brothers will be black.

Outside the house and the school, the Brothers will wear a hat, which will be six inches wide and four and a half inches high.

They will have a collar made of black serge, lined with plain cloth, equipped in front with untreated cowhide, and fastened by two hooks.

The clothing of the Brothers will be sewn with common thread or with wool.

All the clothing, except the vest and the collar, will be made in one of the communities of each province, which will also supply the hats for all the other houses of the province. The Brother Superior of the Institute will designate the community for this purpose.

They will also have rabats of plain cloth with bibs four inches long and three and a half inches wide.

The undershirts will be made simply and without fancy cuffs.

The Brothers will wear socks of plain cloth in the summer and of wool in the winter.

They will also have black gloves of ordinary wool and use them only in school, where they will leave them with their signal.

They will also have a handwarmer covered with black serge, which they will use in the house and elsewhere.

Their shoes will be made of ordinary cowhide and two simple, plain, thick soles. The heels will not extend more than one inch in length from the soles. The shoes will be tied with a cord. Each house will make its own shoes.

### **The Food of the Brothers of This Institute**

The food of the Brothers will be ordinary common food, always the same.

They will eat no chicken, except in case of illness, and no eggs during Lent.

They will eat what is available at the cheaper markets. They can eat fish when it is available at a cheaper price than eggs.

They will have breakfast daily except on church or community fast days, when they will be given a piece of bread and half a pint of wine.

On the days they eat meat, they will only eat meat from the butcher shop, six ounces for each person, with a pint of wine at every meal. At dinner they will have soup, a serving of boiled beef, and dessert or salad. At supper they will eat hash, beef ragout, or stew.

They may be given a cold dessert at supper in the summer, when there is an abundance of fruit, salads, and so on, from Easter to All Saints.

They will not eat roast or pastry unless some has been given to them out of charity.

On days of abstinence from meat, at dinner they will be given soup, a prepared serving of three eggs, or the equivalent nourishment of three eggs as either eggs or vegetables, plus dessert or salad. At supper they will be given a serving of vegetables.

At dinner on days of a church fast, they will have a serving of two eggs and a portion of vegetables or dessert, and for supper in the evening, four ounces of bread with a pint of wine. With the bread they will be given some fresh or stewed fruit, which is also served on days of a community fast.

The end.

We, the undersigned Superior of the Society of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, send herewith to our dear Br. Jean François, Director of the house of the Brothers of the Christian Schools of Saint-Denis, the Rule of a Director of the Brothers of our Society, copied as above along with two chapters, one on the clothing, the other on the food of the Brothers of our said Society. Altogether it is made up of seven pages, each initialed by us: the Rule and the two chapters as arranged and approved both by us and by the Brothers Directors of our said Society at our assembly that was held in our house of Saint Yon, suburb of Rouen, in the month of May of the year 1717, to be put into practice and observed by our said Brother and by his successors in his assignment as Director. In faith of which we have signed. Done at our said house of Saint Yon, this 30 October 1718.

Joseph Truffet, called Brother Barthélemy.

# Appendix 1

## For a Better Understanding of Our Rule

Maurice Hermans, FSC

It is my intention in this article<sup>1</sup> to present several themes that I offered some six years ago for study and reflection by the Brothers in the Second Novitiate in Rome. In doing so, I am yielding to their urging rather than to any wish of my own, for I consider that my work

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1. This essay, originally a talk to the Brothers in the Second Novitiate in Rome in 1948, is a study of how De La Salle adapted monastic practices in his Rule for the Brothers. The English translation, by Augustine Loes, FSC, is neither literal nor complete. The words of Brother Maurice and his thought are respected, but the essay has been abridged because the primary purpose of the translation is for use by participants in programs of Lasallian formation. This goal is quite different than the purpose of the talk by Brother Maurice, which was for mature Brothers, fifty years ago, who were living the original Rule. Five years after this essay was written and ten years after it was first delivered as a lecture, the Institute began a complete revision and rewriting of the Rule. The essay, however, has lasting value because it is a good study of the fundamental principles of De La Salle's work in creating the Institute.

Brother Maurice asserts that a study of the history of monasticism reveals how thoroughly De La Salle examined the rules of the early legislators of the religious life. Although this essay focuses on the relationship of the monastic rules to chapter two and chapter sixteen of De La Salle's Rule, a study of the other chapters would show how completely De La Salle researched the writings of other religious orders. The references and copious footnotes in the original bibliography cover five pages; the essay (eighty pages) is accompanied by equally numerous notes. Since most of the notes refer to works in French, they are not translated here, but when suitable, their substance is incorporated in the text. All in all, this work of Brother Maurice Hermans is the equivalent of a reputable dissertation for a doctorate in the history of spirituality. For the complete French text, see *Cahiers lasalliens* 5, 323–403.

on this topic is still incomplete. The hope that I will soon receive criticism and new insights from those who will read this text has led me not to delay publication any longer. Please excuse, then, the limitations of this provisional draft, which, God willing, is destined for future revision.

I am striving to increase my understanding of a document that is important for all of us, not only for our personal belief and conduct but for the very life of the great Society of which it is the defining charter. It is important that we discover the wealth of meaning in this fundamental document. We have to admit that we are not sufficiently prepared for the task. To study a writing of this age, of this size and significance, presupposes an examination of its sources. On each page we must examine statements whose real meaning is not discovered by a simple understanding of the words themselves; the true meaning of their content is dependent on much older traditions. So, to help us have a better understanding of our Rule, we must discover how it is inserted into the great monastic literature of which it is a kind of echo, a sort of adapted version.

We should also explore many other areas: a comparative study, for example, of the Rules created in the Church of France during the great century that was just coming to an end when De La Salle wrote our Rule, also a study of the conciliar and synodal resolutions of this same very productive epoch and an examination of the evolution of the text: its own development over two and a half decades. These are all details that can clarify how we must understand the language of our Rule.

My modest contribution intends to focus on one point: the traditional themes of monastic legislation that enter into our text. I do not intend to point out formal borrowings from the older Rules but rather to discover in our text how our Founder carefully adapted the common thought of the great founders of religious orders.

Saint Basil, Saint Augustine, and Saint Benedict, in legislating obedience to a Rule for their monks and nuns, established the foundations of all monasticism. Their Rules are essentially a patrimony of the Church that has enriched practically all successive Rules. Exact information about the great Rules will, therefore, contribute to a better understanding of our own legislative texts; such information will help us rediscover their original form and inner spirit.

Nothing is more needed and more urgent at this present time. The letter of the Rule breeds death; it is the spirit of the Rule that gives life. This is not fiction; it is capable of happening every day in different ways. Each generation must make an effort to be aware of this

fact at its own expense. New insights are possible today that could not have been achieved yesterday; tools of study are available to us that our predecessors did not have or use; historical and critical studies, publications, and research documents are continually being produced. Very clear syntheses, available only recently, can also help us in the unexplored and more hidden areas of our origins and early development.

I am attempting to discover the heritage of supreme importance about which Pope Pius XII spoke to a recent Congress on the States of Perfection:

There is a patrimony of the Church that has been preserved intact since its origins; it has remained unchanged in the course of centuries, always perfectly adapted to all the needs and desires of the human person. The principal part of this patrimony is the Catholic faith; another part is the state of perfection in its essential elements, which you must keep alive today with the greatest possible zeal. The circumstances of life that change do not in any way alter this patrimony.<sup>2</sup>

Although necessity in the course of time can demand the modification of structures, the same inner life must inspire persons and institutions today. The spirit that gave life to the first religious can be the promise of new life today for the works they left us.

## Our Rule, a Monument to Tradition

In addition to the Scriptures, whose authority they never questioned, the early monks always gave a special place to the prescriptions of their Rule as a text worthy of particular respect. In the early Church, when “virgins” or “ascetics” made profession of the most complete renunciation, the bishop gave them a Rule: either some testimony of a holy person or a treatise on the state of virginity. These documents contained personal directives, more or less formalized. Saint Pachomius gave the first monks, his “brothers,” certain laws that were in addition to his exhortations and letters; they formed a collection called *Precepts*, whose positive spirit was quite ahead of his time. Following Pachomius, every founder of a monastery or abbey felt obliged to give laws to his disciples, or at least the Rule of an earlier

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2. Congress on the States of Perfection, 8 December 1950.

founder. From the fourth century to the seventh century, such writings multiplied without much difference one from another.

One question seemed to be of little concern to all these monks: what is the authority of the Rule? The vast majority accepted the Rule more or less without question. It seems clear that a Rule was a sort of “decalogue” for monks, proclaimed as written by the finger of God or by the pen of an angel and given to a Moses of a new people chosen in the midst of fire on some new Mount Sinai. One legend, more popular than others, proposed that the Rule of Saint Pachomius was dictated to him by a heavenly spirit, which resolved any problem of authority quite simply. The monks’ devotion to the Rule found its basis in this legend; any questions were often resolved in similar and altogether irrefutable claims. Most founders have been regarded as inspired by God in their choice, or their rewriting, of their Rule. Saint Francis of Assisi would not fail to make it clear to unhappy friars that he had written his Rule at God’s dictation.

I have no intention of casting doubt on such firm assertions. All biographies of founders relate how they proclaimed their entire submission to the Holy Spirit. Convinced of the supernatural importance of their choice and providentially drawn to legislate for their brothers, they were determined before anything else to be docile instruments in the hands of God: they begged and prayed; they spent long hours in solitary meditation to draw near to God; they used penances and bodily mortification to rid themselves of all human considerations, egoism, and self-interest.

The biographers of Saint John Baptist de La Salle depict him in complete conformity with this solid tradition. Every time they tell us about his work of writing the Rule, they take care to relate once again his asceticism, nights of prayer, fasting, and prolonged intercession before God. To read and reread these accounts is to realize how they reflect the most beautiful pages of monastic literature.

Although there is no doubt about the divine assistance and the special enlightenment of a founder of an order in the composition of his Rule, this certainty does not dispense us from studying the human components in this work of close collaboration between founder and God. Whether sacred author or not, the writer of our religious observances has not given up his personality, human experience, and opportunity to learn from others. The author’s work maintains the characteristics of his personal ideas and reveals the sources of his thoughts, all in witness to his considerable study. Fully aware of the seriousness of what he is creating and in no way desirous of being original, a founder avoids any rashness of unfounded assertions. He



prefers to base himself on the proven wisdom of the holiest practices. Paying heed to such wisdom at every stage will not hinder him in any way.

Quite naturally, the Rule of Saint Basil borrowed from the *Precepts* of Saint Pachomius, just as Saint Benedict made use of those of Saint Augustine and many others. Similarly, in a genre not too different, such books as *The Imitation of Christ* and *The Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius Loyola ought not to be regarded as instantaneous creations but rather as the crystallization of elements adapted to the historical time and place. An author keeps his personality and affirms it in a particular way both by the choices he makes when he composes and by the soundness of the synthesis he creates.

The same is true, I believe, for the Rule written by Saint John Baptist de La Salle. There is no question that the Rule of 1705 and the Rule of 1718, as well as *Pratique du Règlement journalier*, are principally the work of the Founder, but it is also clear that the Brothers—and even persons outside the Institute—were consulted and proposed amendments. I hope to show at what point certain fundamental chapters of our Rule (especially chapters 2 and 16) are descendants of the great monastic precepts and to what degree they take on the principal traditional themes. These chapters appear under an original form, but they maintain a strict fidelity of thought to forms inherited from the past.

For the moment, let me give some examples of how our texts are related to monastic traditions and deserve to be regarded as such. Among the earliest practices in *Pratique*, we read, “On all fast days the bell is rung for spiritual reading at 5:15, for interior prayer at 6:15.”<sup>3</sup> It is clear from this text that on fast days the spiritual reading began a quarter of an hour earlier and ended a quarter of an hour later. The intent was not to make the fast more severe but simply to provide an extra half-hour for spiritual reading, in accord with a monastic tradition to do more reading during Lent. For example, Saint Benedict wrote:

Throughout Lent the monks will occupy themselves with reading from Matins until the end of the third hour. . . . During the days of Lent, each monk will be given a book from the library, which he will read through to the end.<sup>4</sup>

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3. Chapter 30, article 9; see above, 120.

4. Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 48, articles 14 and 15; the English translation is based on the French text in the original article.

Our Rule did not keep this extra time for spiritual reading on fast days, but successive revisions of the chapter on the daily exercises will keep a parenthetical phrase that we now can understand better:

At 5:30 (on fast days as well as on other days) the bell will be rung for spiritual reading, which all the Brothers will make by themselves in the common room.<sup>5</sup>

In the same *Pratique*, detailed practices are prescribed for the two principal meals: washing of hands, grace before meals, accusation of faults, and reading of various books.

During the reading of *The Imitation*, the crumbs on the table will be collected; the grace after meals will be said; after that they will go to the oratory while reciting alternately the Psalm *Ecce quam bonum*.<sup>6</sup>

These details reflect analogous practices of the monasteries, but on one detail our Rule deliberately differs from that of the monks at mealtime. Saint Benedict's Rule reads: "It must not be that anyone can pick up the book to do the reading, but one monk must be assigned to read for a whole week, beginning on Sunday."<sup>7</sup> Our Rule states:

There will not be a reader who reads during the entire time of a meal, but at each meal all the Brothers will take part in the reading. The Brother Director will read first, unless there are six other Brothers, and all will read in turn, one after the other, when notified by the Brother Director.<sup>8</sup>

The fact that the Rule specifies that the reading will be done by all the Brothers, not by just one, shows clearly that De La Salle not only knows that the monastic practice was to have one monk read for the whole meal (and the whole week) but also does not want this to be the practice in our communities.

Here is another example: in De La Salle's first edition (1705) of the chapter, "The Exercises of Humiliation and Mortification Practiced in This Institute," the first article reads, "There will be no corporal mortification of Rule in this Institute," but this statement is followed

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5. Chapter 27, article 29; see above, 102.

6. *Pratique du Règlement journalier*, 5.

7. Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 38, article 1.

8. Chapter 27, articles 13 and 14; see above, 99.

by a double affirmation of traditions that had already been established:

They will, however, retain the practice that has always been observed of abstinence from meat on the Saturdays from Christmas to the feast of the Purification.

They will also observe this practice, from which no one will excuse himself except for sickness and with the permission of the Brother Director: all the Brothers will fast on the day of the week that they will be assigned individually to receive Communion; their fast will consist not of abstaining but of taking only one meal.<sup>9</sup>

The way this chapter begins—with a negative statement, “There will be no corporal mortification of Rule in this Institute”—demonstrates once again that De La Salle is aware that he is breaking away from a monastic tradition. The prescriptions for corporal mortification in our Rule show that the idea of corporal mortification is understood to apply principally to the deprivation of food.

In other places and in a similar fashion, our Rule keeps remnants of monastic regulations. Some points of Saint Benedict’s Rule will immediately recall texts of our Rule. Here is one example:

Whenever they mention the name of one of the monks, no one will be allowed to name anyone by his name only, but the older ones will give to the younger ones the name *Brother*, and the younger will call the older ones *Nonnus*, a term that expresses reverence as for a father.<sup>10</sup>

Our Rule prescribes that we use the name *Brother* whenever we wish to name any member of the community.<sup>11</sup>

Here is another example from Saint Benedict’s Rule:

When anyone makes a mistake in reciting a Psalm, a response, an antiphon, or a lesson of the Office, if he does not at once make reparation for his mistake by humbling himself in the presence of everyone, he will be given a severe reprimand.<sup>12</sup>

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9. Chapter 5, articles 1 and 2; see above, 25.

10. Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 63, articles 11–12; *Nonnus* (L.) is in Italian *Nonno*, grandfather.

11. Chapter 1, article 1; see above, 13.

12. Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 45, article 1.

Our Rule prescribes that we kiss the floor for mistakes during the recitation of the rosary and the Office but not in our other community prayers,<sup>13</sup> probably because the monastic precept seems to be restricted to the recitation of the different parts of the Divine Office.

Regarding silence after night prayer, Saint Benedict wrote:

After the hour of Compline, no one is allowed to say anything at all. If anyone violates this rule of silence, he will be rigorously punished, unless it is an urgent need of hospitality or an order from the abbot.<sup>14</sup>

This custom is the general practice of monasteries, cited in their Rules, and it is found in our Rule, but with a slight variation that specifies the duration of the silence: “from the time of evening retiring until after interior prayer the next morning.”<sup>15</sup>

With respect to the order of rank among the monks, Saint Benedict wrote:

In the monastery the monks will maintain a rank among themselves determined by the date of their entering the order, the merit of their life, and the decision of the abbot. . . . Thus it is by the order established by the abbot or the one determined by the date of their entering that they will give the kiss of peace at Communion time, intone the Psalms, and take their place in choir.<sup>16</sup>

Among the punishments in the monastery, this “excommunication,” or “downgrading,” was the greatest humiliation that could be inflicted. In contrast, our text reads:

There will be no rank order among the Brothers in the usual exercises, except that the Brother Director and the Sub-Director will have the first two places; the Brothers will take places without distinction or where the Brother Director will assign them; he can change their places whenever he judges it proper.<sup>17</sup>

There is, nonetheless, a distinction between the school Brothers and the serving Brothers, notably in the color of their robe (the serv-

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13. Chapter 4, article 14; see above, 24.

14. Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 42, articles 8–10.

15. Chapter on Silence, article 14; see above, 80.

16. Rule of Saint Benedict, chapter 63, articles 1, 4.

17. Chapter 13, article 13; see above, 61.

ing Brothers wear a brown robe), the manner of making their novitiate, and their vows.

At the beginning of this presentation, I offer these examples of the relationship between our precepts and those of monasticism to introduce a more profound examination of the basic influence of monasticism on our Rule, which is the purpose of the rest of this study.

## A Study of Chapter 2 of Our Rule

### 1. The Text

Chapter 2 of the Rule is entitled “The Spirit of This Institute” and describes the practice of this spirit. The text remains unchanged from 1705 up to and including the 1947 edition of the Rule, except for the introductory article written by De La Salle in 1718, the slight change in article 2, and the addition of article 11, which prescribes the public reading of the Rule, a chapter at a time, on certain days.

The *Collection of Various Short Treatises* (referred to subsequently as *Collection*) also includes this chapter of the Rule, but with a more complete title: “The Spirit of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Which Is the Spirit of Faith.” This section of the *Collection* begins as follows:

Faith should be the light and guide of all Christians, to lead and direct them in the way of salvation. . . . It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that we who belong to an Institute whose aim is to educate the children confided to our care should, in the spirit of Christianity and to procure this for them, be imbued and so completely filled with the Spirit of Faith. . . .<sup>18</sup>

### 2. The Introductory Article

In the article that De La Salle added in 1718, the Founder wants to stress the primacy of the spirit over all the details of the life of the Brothers. A Rule must by its very name give a complete sum of the religious and professional obligations of an institute, list in detail all the norms and principles of organization and schedule, and regulate the entire life of its members. De La Salle wants to make clear that with respect to any prescription of the Rule or all of them together:

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18. *Collection of Various Short Treatises*, 30.

That which is of the utmost importance and to which the greatest attention ought to be given in a Community is that all who compose it possess the spirit peculiar to it, that the novices apply themselves to acquire it, and that those who are already members make it their first care to preserve and increase it in themselves. For it is this spirit that ought to animate all their actions and be the motive of their whole conduct. Those who do not possess it and those who have lost it ought to be looked upon as dead members, and they ought to look upon themselves as such, because they are deprived of the life and grace of their state, and they ought to be convinced that it will be very difficult for them to preserve the grace of God.<sup>19</sup>

The Founder is at the end of his life, and he seems to have achieved a clear perspective on all the work he had done in creating the Institute and formulating its structures. He recognizes what is truly of first importance, and he states it emphatically as a new article at the beginning of this chapter.

There must, of course, be no question of opposing the regulations of the Society and its spirituality. It is inconceivable that the Brothers could “preserve and increase in themselves” the spirit of the Institute while abandoning any concern for their everyday duties and regulations. It is a question of placing the emphasis on the animating spirit over fidelity to observance in itself. All formalism is rejected. The Rule is not a simple code of precepts suitable for robots. The Founder issues an urgent demand to develop the highest level of the spiritual life, to live fully the life of supernatural faith.

### 3. The Unity of the Spirit

Following the introductory article, the next article states:

The spirit of this Institute is, first, a spirit of faith, which ought to induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute everything to God.<sup>20</sup>

The word *first* indicates that there will be a *second*, which occurs at the end of chapter 2:

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19. Chapter 2, article 1; see above, 16.

20. Chapter 2, article 2; see above, 16–17.

The spirit of this Institute consists, secondly, in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children and and for bringing them up in the fear of God.<sup>21</sup>

*Secondly* does not mean two separate spirits but rather a relationship between two elements of one spirit, a relationship of cause to effect. The spirit of faith is the source, and the spirit of zeal is one of its essential manifestations, one of the necessary effects. I want to emphasize clearly that at no time in our Rule or in any statement attributable to our Founder is there any idea of two separate spirits for the Institute. As a matter of fact, spirit is indivisible. It would likewise be totally untenable to oppose faith and zeal or to establish any exclusiveness between the spirit of faith and the spirit of zeal. That is not the thought of the Founder. When we speak of the spirit of faith or the spirit of zeal, we do so in the way we speak of the spirit of humility or the spirit of penance, indicating by the word *spirit* that there is a certain way for a person to be so attuned to the one or the other of these virtues that he appears to act that way quite readily, almost predetermined.

When we speak of the spirit of the Institute, however, it is not exactly the same as when we speak of a virtue, but we intend to mean analogously an ensemble of dispositions that must animate a person who claims the right to belong to this Society. One of these dispositions, in the eyes of the Founder, is absolutely necessary: the spirit of faith. Another essential disposition, but secondary and flowing from the first, is the spirit of zeal. Quite naturally, De La Salle gives the greatest attention in the Rule and in the *Collection* to the first disposition, and he places the second in the shadow of the first, rounding out the picture of the spirit of the Institute by adding a distinctive but less fundamental trait.

The text in the *Collection*, in several instances, leaves no doubt that faith is the single spirit of the Institute. For example, the title of the chapter is “The Spirit of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, Which Is the Spirit of Faith,” and the first paragraph states, “We will consider the sentiments and maxims of faith as the rule of our conduct, and the spirit of faith as the spirit of our Institute.”<sup>22</sup> Speaking of the means to acquire and practice this spirit, the text adds that without these practices the Brothers “can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of the Institute.”<sup>23</sup> Later in the text, in an

21. Chapter 2, article 9; see above, 18.

22. *Collection*, 30.

23. *Ibid.*, 31.

explanation of the topic, the question, “What is the spirit of our Institute?” is answered by “It is the spirit of faith.”<sup>24</sup>

Throughout seventeen pages of explaining the effects of this spirit and how it can be acquired and preserved, the focus is entirely on faith with no similar treatment of the spirit of zeal. Elsewhere in the *Collection*, in “A Collection of Subjects on Which the Brothers Should Speak During Recreation,” number 11 is “The spirit of the Institute, which is the spirit of faith, and the aim of the Institute, which is the Christian instruction and education of youth.”<sup>25</sup>

The way the Rule speaks of the spirit of zeal shows its dependence on the spirit of faith:

The spirit of this Institute consists, secondly, in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children [that is, teaching religion] and for bringing them up . . . in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel [that is, faith].<sup>26</sup>

It is clear in De La Salle’s mind that the spirit of faith is sought not as an end in itself but as a means to achieve the purpose of the Institute, which is the instruction of children in the spirit of Christianity. It is this spirit that alone can make our actions effectively focus on what is essential:

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 and inspiring them with a great aversion and a very great horror for sin and for all that could cause them to lose purity.<sup>27</sup>

Thus the spirit of faith implies the zeal to instruct youth. Because of this task, faith is the necessary spirit of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and is called “principally” the source of life for their vocation, which “secondly” will energize their role and employment. Without this precise purpose, their life would end up being only contemplative or devoted to hospitality.

24. *Collection*, 32.

25. *Ibid.*, 26.

26. Chapter 2, articles 9 and 10; see above, 18–19.

27. Chapter 2, article 9; see above, 18–19.



#### 4. Use of the Scriptures in Defining the Spirit of Faith

When the *Collection* first deals with the spirit of faith, it does not attempt a definition, but it speaks, like the Rule, about the effects of this spirit. Later, in the section on the explanation of the spirit, the text does give a definition in answer to the question “What is the spirit of faith?” by stating, “It is a spirit that is regulated and guided in all things by the maxims and sentiments of faith, taken especially from Holy Scripture.”<sup>28</sup> In this way the spirit of faith is profoundly connected with the earliest understanding of monasticism as a search for God through the guidance of the Scriptures, a point illustrated later in this same article.

When the three effects of the spirit of faith are presented, Holy Scripture is used as the essential and practically indispensable means to understand these effects. Each effect is related to a passage from the Scriptures. Examples are given of what is meant by “looking upon things with the eyes of faith”: in the presence of a beautiful building, recall Christ’s prediction of the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem; at mealtime, remember the words of Saint Paul about those who make a god of their belly; to “consider poverty as an advantage,” think of it in the light of the first beatitude.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, the second effect, “not to do anything but in view of God,” means to animate all actions with sentiments of faith, “calling to mind, for instance, such passages of Holy Scripture as may help to incite us to do them well.”<sup>30</sup> Three quotations from Saint Paul are given, and a later section of the *Collection* has several pages of scriptural passages to help the Brothers perform all their various actions in the spirit of faith.<sup>31</sup>

To attribute all to God [the third effect of the spirit of faith] is to accept both good and evil as coming from God’s hands, saying with Job, “The Lord has given me all; the Lord has taken all from me; blessed be the name of the Lord.”<sup>32</sup>

The Rule adds: “other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.”<sup>33</sup>

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28. *Collection*, 32.

29. *Ibid.*, 33.

30. *Ibid.*, 35.

31. *Ibid.*, 38–44.

32. *Ibid.*, 34.

33. Chapter 2, article 2; see above, 17.

To live in the spirit of faith, then, presumes a great familiarity with the Scriptures. This is why De La Salle places “a most profound respect for Holy Scripture” as the first means needed to help the Brothers acquire and be guided by the spirit of faith. To show this respect,

they will always carry with them the New Testament and pass no day without reading some of it through a sentiment of faith, respect, and veneration for the divine words contained in it.<sup>34</sup>

The 1718 manuscript copy of the Rule adds: “looking upon it as their first and principal rule.”<sup>35</sup> A letter of the Founder to a Sister states this thought even more clearly:

From now on, look on your rules as an explanation and an application of what is contained in the Gospels. Observe them as such. The spirit of faith will lead you to give practical application to this frame of mind.<sup>36</sup>

Chapter 2 of the Rule, then, can be summarized by saying that there is a fundamental equivalence between our Rule and the Scriptures. To express this another way, we can say that the key idea of this chapter is very closely tied to the most authentic traditions and the most constant directives of monastic legislation.

## 5. The Bible, Rule of Faith

The teaching of the Magisterium can lead us to dispense ourselves too easily as individuals from using the Scriptures to base our belief on the revealed truths. We no longer need, like the monks of old, to be guided step by step and by continual study to discover in the Scriptures the dogmatic message transmitted by God through the obscurity of human words. Through prolonged nights of study, our forerunners pondered and questioned with an eagerness we no longer have. Furthermore, they were not always prepared for this theological role; in addition, monasteries and monks of every kind did not know how to protect themselves from the great heresies of the fourth century. Today, fortunately, we have the teaching of the Magisterium to be our guide and protection.

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34. Chapter 2, article 3; see above, 17.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Letters of John Baptist de La Salle*, 106.4.

The Church continues to study the Scriptures. She asks and will continue to ask that the Scriptures be the first guide for her teaching. We must do the same, as urged by many texts of *Meditations by John Baptist de La Salle*:

See how important it is for you to know Holy Scripture well, since Saint Paul assures us . . . that this knowledge makes a person strong in the faith and in the practice of good.<sup>37</sup>

The Founder adds that we must devote our care to teach “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 doctrinal.”<sup>38</sup>

In *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer*, when he asks us to make an act of faith, the Founder also urges us at the same time to have our faith rely on some scriptural passage.<sup>39</sup> He says that this makes the act of faith more vivid and creates a stronger impression on us insofar as these words of the Scriptures are the words of God, words that have a divine influence and lead us to God.

## 6. The Bible, Rule of Prayer

When an early monk turned his mind to God, he instinctively had recourse to the Bible. Was his prayer ever, in fact, interrupted? Was his reading of the words of the Scriptures anything else than prayer? He learned by heart the Psalms and certain other books of the Bible. His prayer was before all else a recitation of the inspired texts and of invocations borrowed from them. Any unlearned person who asked to be admitted to the monastery was taught the Lord’s Prayer and as many Psalms as he could memorize, or according to one text, “twenty Psalms, two Epistles, or another part of the Scriptures.”<sup>40</sup>

Whether hermit or monk, the person acquired such a familiarity with the Psalms and the whole Bible that it became impossible for him to pray in any other way than the way that the Patriarchs and the Prophets prayed. So it often happens that we cannot without difficulty distinguish the words of the Bible from the prayers that have come down to us from the great ascetics of old.

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37. *Meditations*, 192.1.

38. *Ibid.*, 194.3.

39. *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer*, 58, 66.

40. *Pachomiana latina*, Pr. 49, 139.

Similarly, all the examples of prayer that De La Salle gives in *Explanation of the Method of Interior Prayer* and in his other writings maintain this long and beautiful tradition of the best scriptural inspiration. In addition to the Psalms, he makes his own the language of the whole range of biblical writers: Jacob, the Spouse of the Canticle, Susanna, Peter, Zacchaeus, and the Publican. He makes his own the response of God to those who believe in him and the reply of Christ to the persons he meets on the roads of Palestine. De La Salle lives the Gospel scenes and the great moments of the mystery of our redemption. He does so with such ease and consistency that his language is clearly the result of prolonged intimacy and conversation with God about all these events.

## 7. The Bible, Rule of Life

For the early monk, the Bible was not just the rule of faith and prayer; it was also the inspiration for all his actions, the rule of his entire life. He found a model in the figure of the Prophet: opposed to the false values of the world, completely turned to God, entirely submissive to the breath of the Holy Spirit. He saw the Apostles in company with Christ as the ideal community of prayer and renunciation, with Christ as the source of light and peace. He also strove to imitate the life of the first Christians of Jerusalem, who were of one heart and mind, having everything in common. In a word, the Bible showed what ought to be the perfection of the consecrated life. With his eyes fixed on these great examples, the monk kept turning to the inspired writings with a passion to find described there in detail a program of asceticism and holiness.

“The Sacred Scriptures are sufficient for our teaching,” said Saint Anthony Abbot at the beginning of his exhortation to all the monks. He explained this by adding:

It is necessary for the soul to be imprinted with the precepts of the Scriptures and to remember the actions of the saints so as to unite to their enthusiasm a constant attention to the divine commandments.<sup>41</sup>

In the final chapter of his Rule for Monks, Saint Benedict confirms this doctrine by telling the aspirant to the perfect life that he ought to prefer the Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, as in this little Rule for beginners: “Is not one page, one word

41. *Life of Saint Anthony*, by Saint Athanasius, chapter 16.

of divine authority in the Old and New Testaments, a very sure rule for the guidance of our life?"<sup>42</sup>

This has been the consistent teaching of the monastic tradition: God has spoken to our ancestors his words of wisdom and mercy; none of his words must be wasted; our salvation and the precepts of the life he wants us to live are all found in the Scriptures.

This way of looking on Holy Scripture as the true and complete rule for monasticism cannot be more strongly affirmed than in the teaching of Saint Basil. For him the Sacred Books contain, explicitly or implicitly, all the doctrine and practices of the life of a monk. As a consequence, every member of the monastery ought to regard and use the Scriptures correctly as the complete ideal of monastic life. Because preference is given to the New Testament, especially to the Gospel, we can speak of the Rule of Saint Benedict as an abbreviation of the Gospel. In general, all the ancient Rules are shorter versions of the Gospel.

Contemporary writers have emphasized this necessary dependence even more, if possible. The *Dictionary of Spirituality* includes the statement, taken from the first directives of Saint Bruno, "The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as interpreted by the teaching of the Catholic Church, will be maintained as the Rule for all Carthusians."<sup>43</sup> But no text is more explicit on this topic than the prologue of the Rule of Grandmont. The author, Saint Stephen of Muret [1045–1124], shows how the most ancient rules have simply borrowed from the Gospel, the one and only rule for faith and salvation. He ends his explanation with this exhortation:

Cling, then, to the branches of Christ, who is the true vine; take care to fulfill the precepts of the Gospel as far as you are able with his help. If anyone asks you what your profession is, what rule you follow, or what order you belong to, say that yours is the first and principal rule of the Christian religion, that is, the Gospel, the source and basis for all rules.<sup>44</sup>

It is clear, then, that when we are asked to consider the New Testament as our "first and principal rule," De La Salle is only making an obvious statement. He repeats the invitation and summons that all the monastic legislators regularly repeat. We ought not to take an indifferent attitude toward this statement of the Founder when it appears at

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42. *Rule of Saint Benedict*, chapter 73, article 3.

43. "Chartreux," *Dictionary of Spirituality*, vol 2, col. 704.

44. *Patrologia Latina*, 204.

the head of our Rule, for it unites us to the long line of monks who have claimed to find their true code of perfection in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 8. The Bible in the Details of Monastic Life

It is not surprising that many precepts of the ancient Rules refer directly to the Scriptures. For example, the Rule of the monastic prior unites all his various duties to dozens of scriptural quotations. This is especially true of the ascetical writings of Saint Basil. He considers that the monks are to be Christians in the fullest sense of that term. He joins one or more scriptural quotations with each detail of his Rule. He urges the reader to take a copy of the New Testament to find the source from which each rule has been drawn. He follows this to the letter when he writes his rules for poverty, obedience, and charity—even matters of clothing and the small details of modesty, work, food, and drink. He always makes reference, explicitly or implicitly, to the New Testament.

To take one example of minor importance, the wearing of the cincture, the rule is short, but it cites the example of John the Baptist (he wore a leather belt around his waist), of Elijah (he was a hairy man with a leather belt around his waist), of Job (wear your belt around your waist like a man), of Saint Peter (put on your belt and wear your sandals), of Saint Paul (referring to the Prophet Agabus in Acts 11:28), of the disciples (Christ told them not to carry gold, silver, or money in their belts and to take nothing for the journey except what they wear; that is, one belt is enough), of Christ himself (he tied a towel around his waist when he washed the feet of his Apostles).<sup>45</sup>

This is an example of the monastic ideal that makes the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures the rule for the least prescriptions. It is not limited to Saint Basil, even though none of the early founders makes such an effort to insist on this ideal. When Saint Augustine, for example, undertakes to shame his fainthearted monks, who do not want to sow or reap any more than the birds of the air, he responds with a vigorous little text based on Saint Paul's second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Similarly, he takes to task those who refuse to be tonsured, insisting that they follow the orders of the great Apostle and the example of their brothers in the monastic life.<sup>46</sup>

The daily life of the monastery brings the monk into constant contact with the Scriptures: in the Psalms and lessons of the Divine

45. *Rule of Saint Basil*, 23; PG 31, 981.

46. Saint Augustine, *De Opere Monachorum*, citing 2 Thess. 3:10–14.

Office, the reading during the meals, the conferences by the abbot, the study of the commentaries, and especially the *lectio divina*. It is always the Bible that they read or hear read; it is God's word speaking to them. Even during manual labor, during the "lost moments" when they move in silence from one gathering of the community to another and while waiting for the beginning of the meal, a prayer, or a conference, the monks are occupied with some passage of the Scriptures, reflecting on it, studying its meaning for them in all the events of their daily life. In a word, there is no action of the monk that is not under the guidance of God; the monk's care is to bring his entire life into perfect harmony with the teaching of the Scriptures because the Bible is the word of God.

Without being too literal, we can show how this concern of early monasticism affected the basic directives of the chapter in our Rule on the spirit of the Institute. The Founder gives two ways:

To enter into this spirit and to live up to it, first, the Brothers of this Society will have a most profound respect for Holy Scripture . . . looking upon it as their first and principal rule.

Second, the Brothers of this Society will animate all their actions with sentiments of faith, and in performing them, they will always have in view the orders and the will of God, which they will adore in all things and by which they will be careful to guide and govern themselves.<sup>47</sup>

It is easy to see the relationship of these two basic injunctions for acquiring and growing in the spirit of faith: always having God's will in our actions and discovering God's will in Holy Scripture. It is also easy to see how these commands reflect the concern of early monasticism to discover the will of God in everyday life and to be devoted completely to the study of the Scriptures, especially the New Testament and the Gospel.

As if the Rule were not clear on this, the *Collection* gives superabundant proof:

How may we animate our actions with sentiments of faith? It is by performing them through some motive of faith, calling to mind, for instance, such passages of Holy Scripture as may help to incite us to do them well.<sup>48</sup>

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47. Chapter 2, articles 3 and 4; see above, 17.

48. *Collection*, 35.

Eleven subsequent pages in the original *Collection* list “Passages of Holy Scripture That May Help the Brothers to Perform Their Actions Through a Spirit of Faith” in all the moments, events, and activities of the day. These pages show a parallel content with the similar passages of the Scriptures in the Rules of early monasticism, especially in the fourth century. De La Salle also uses Holy Scripture this way in *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility*.

Thirty-six of the scriptural quotations in the *Collection* are from the Old Testament, including eleven from the Psalms, ten from Ecclesiastes, and six from Proverbs; fourteen of the forty passages from the New Testament are from Saint Paul. Several of these passages are for the occasions of teaching catechism, thanksgiving after Communion, and mealtime, whereas generally only two or three citations are applied to a particular action. The selections are made from among those that are easy to understand and that apply to the occasion. Their aim is to assist, not to distract, much less to lead astray. The list of short quotations only suggests a method. Each of us is left to make a choice that is most suitable for the person and the occasion. In keeping with the spirit of his epoch, the Founder also proposes *The Imitation of Christ* as the source of passages to keep in mind.

The *Collection* recommends that the Scriptures “should be read from beginning to end methodically, but a passage at random might be read when you have a moment to spare.”<sup>49</sup> De La Salle wants to avoid fragmentation of the divine word. Although a specific passage may have a special relevance and benefit at a given moment, it is nonetheless important to preserve the full meaning of a passage in its actual context; otherwise, there is danger of losing the life-giving gift of the Holy Spirit that inspires the text.

## 9. The Bible, the Form of the Monk’s Way of Thinking

The Rule of Saint Benedict presents the various exercises of the contemplative life in a magnificent balance: *opus Dei* and *lectio divina*. They are the two most sacred times and the most productive actions of the monk. In long chapters of his Rule, Saint Benedict describes in detail the monastic ritual of what we call the Office, which he names “the work of God.” It is, in effect, a continual meditation on the Psalms and on readings drawn from the Old Testament and the New Testament, wisely alternating, allowing many occasions for prolonging the time of choral prayer in moments of silent reflection.

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49. *Collection*, 88.



We who do not recite the Divine Office have difficulty understanding all the blessings that come from the practice of praying the Psalms. Fortunately, today we are beginning to discover them, but will we ever be able to develop a love for them, taking them to heart as those contemplatives who find in them the fullness of their prayer and all the depths of their teaching, who find their deepest spiritual aspirations expressed in them?

Consider as much as you can what *lectio divina* meant to our distant forerunners in the religious life. It was an essential practice of monasticism. Louis Bouyer calls it “spiritual reading consecrated especially to meditation on Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church.”<sup>50</sup> Thomas Merton calls it a reading “that is limited to Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church and that in its method and purpose is more prayerful than intellectual.”<sup>51</sup>

All the definitions of *lectio divina* try to signify clearly the meaning of the adjective *divina*. It is first and foremost the meeting and grasping of the word as found in the Scriptures, the focus of all the human faculties illuminated by the grace of God in the search for understanding the message that God wants to give to one human person. It is meditative, prayerful reading, which leads directly to contemplation.

For four hours each day, in choir, refectory, and cell, the Benedictine monk is in the spiritual world of Prophets and Patriarchs. The Latin Bible is so deeply imprinted on his mind that he thinks in that language and sees all things in the light of its images; the whole universe itself gradually finds its meaning in the Scriptures. The Bible is a world, and this world is none other than the one whose days, one by one, are played out in accord with the plan of God. In time, and without intentional research, the monk ends up judging everything according to God’s plan, looking on everything with the eyes of faith, that is, conformable to the mind of God. In this assiduous attention to the Scriptures, the monk acquires the ability to think supernaturally. The thoughts of God take the place of his thoughts; the sentiments of God become his own, and he takes on the mind of Christ, about which Saint Paul wrote to the Philippians.<sup>52</sup> Faith, found in the word of the Scriptures, extinguishes a vision that is limited to this world; henceforth, the monk lives in the eternal world.

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50. *Le sens de la vie monastique*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952, 28. [*The Meaning of the Monastic Life*. Translated by Kathleen Pond. London: Burns & Oates, 1955.]

51. *Aux sources du silence*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952, 28.

52. Phil. 2:5.

These observations about the richness of the monk's experience of the Scriptures give us some appreciation of how De La Salle imbues his teaching with the great value of the monastic tradition. To begin, consider the insistence in our regulations on reading or listening to the divine word. Every day, according to the Rule, there are three readings from the New Testament—the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles at the noon meal, the Epistles and Revelation at supper, and at the beginning of the evening exercises, a half page of the New Testament while kneeling.

On Sundays and feasts, during the three days of Holy Week, on three of the six days of vacation, and daily during the annual retreat, the original regulations prescribe additional moments for this reading of the Scriptures.<sup>53</sup>

Each day also has its prescribed time for “spiritual reading,” for which the *Collection* states that the Director selects the book that the Brother will read, which the Brother will do in the presence of God, asking for the grace to understand and practice what he reads. The *Collection* warns against reading out of mere curiosity and urges the Brothers to take time to reflect on what they are reading, to pause and make repeated application to their own life.<sup>54</sup> These are the characteristics of the traditional *lectio divina*, the true teaching of monasticism.

The early Fathers of the Church (for example, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Isidore of Seville) tell the monk: “Read your book as you would read a letter from Jesus Christ sent to you so that you might know his will.”<sup>55</sup> They tell us to see this book as a message written by God and addressed by God to each soul. They want us to have this attitude especially when we read the Scriptures. For them, as for our Founder, the book to read is, above all, the Bible. They tell us, in effect, to respect every least syllable of the Scriptures; to read the Bible with a humble attitude, with submission to the divine teaching in it, to the Church that presents it to us, and to the Holy Spirit, who inspires it and by it sanctifies the Church. We are to practice what we understand, which is the purpose of the teaching, to adore what we do not understand, and if we want to understand, we are to ask those who know to tell us the meaning of the text. It is fidelity to this teaching of the Fathers of the Church, whose disciple he is, that inspires De La Salle to advise us to seek an understanding of the word from those who have received this mission to enlighten us.

53. See above, 45, 91, 98, 100, 102–04, 122–23, 125, 129–30, 137.

54. *Collection*, 61, 87–89.

55. Saint Jerome, Letter 22 to Eustochius, 25.

Our Rule presupposes a familiarity with the Old Testament as well as the New Testament by asking us to read a chapter of Bible history each evening.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the *Collection* specifies that we read the New Testament in a continuous way and be assiduous about having some passages of the Scriptures always in mind.<sup>57</sup> *The Conduct of the Christian Schools* prescribes that scriptural texts and stories from Bible history be read frequently in class. De La Salle arranges for the Psalms to be used in class for practice in reading Latin,<sup>58</sup> and he seems to have put together an edition of the Psalms for community prayer during Holy Week.

## 10. Original Adaptation of Tradition

This influence of the Scriptures on the way of life and thinking of the monk in early monasticism gives us an appreciation for the fundamental thought of De La Salle in writing chapter 2 of our Rule. His method of teaching also includes something original about the relationship of the Scriptures to the attitude of faith. The founders of monasticism, although insisting on the role of the Scriptures as normative for the monk's life, do not speak as clearly and forcefully as our Founder does about reliance on Holy Scripture for developing the supernatural mentality, the spirit of faith. He says clearly:

To enter into this spirit and to live up to it, first, the Brothers of this Society will have a most profound respect for Holy Scripture; in proof of this, they will always carry with them the New Testament and pass no day without reading some of it through a sentiment of faith, respect, and veneration for the divine words contained in it, looking upon it as their first and principal rule.<sup>59</sup>

It is worth noting that the Rules of other modern orders of teaching Brothers borrow, some of them literally and entirely, from De La Salle's presentation of the spirit of faith.

The way the Founder begins chapter 2 of the Rule, on the spirit of faith, presumes that the Scriptures are already a part of the life both of the novice and, *a fortiori*, of all those committed to the Society. A prime example is the way he cites Job to illustrate the third effect of

56. Chapter 27, article 34; see above, 103; chapter 30, articles 13, 16, and 17; see above, 125–26.

57. *Collection*, 61, 88.

58. *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, 69.

59. Chapter 2, article 3; see above, 17.

the spirit of faith: “The Lord gave me everything, and the Lord has taken everything away from me; nothing has happened to me except what pleases him.” The Founder adds that there are “other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.”<sup>60</sup> Such a reference would make no sense unless he presumed a familiarity already acquired with the Scriptures, including the Old Testament, such as the historical books, Job and Genesis, and even a wider knowledge implied in the words, “other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture.”

The example of Job is given, but this should not limit us to saying every now and again, “God be blessed,” sometimes almost flippantly. Such behavior betrays our Rule by grasping the letter and missing the spirit. Happily, in our day people are becoming more appreciative of the importance of the Scriptures, a trend that should not be lost on us, who are so strictly committed to respect for the Bible. Today, too, more and more copies of the Bible are available to us: new translations and all sorts of publications that provide a rich treasure of study to help us understand the Scriptures, much of which was not available to our predecessors in the religious life.

The encyclical on Holy Scripture (*Divino Afflante Spiritu*), issued by Pope Pius XII in 1943,<sup>61</sup> makes it clear that interpretations of the Scriptures must be based both on the teaching of scholars who are recognized by their peers and on the authority of the Church. Our spirit of faith does not dispense us from continual study of this living tradition. There is no justification for any inertia or false assurance that we know all the answers, no matter how much piety may accompany such passivity. This is a life-long journey for us in the Church, a continual endeavor to increase our understanding of God’s plans for us in a spirit of faith based on our study of God’s ways revealed in the Scriptures and in all the events of our life.

An example of the kind of study we ought to make is provided in the way De La Salle uses the Scriptures in his explanation of the third effect of the spirit of faith. His use of Job is an effort to educate us from the very beginning about one of the most challenging mysteries of human life. He uses the book of Job, one of the more easily understood in the Old Testament, most impressive in its form, dramatic, and very human. To appreciate the naked faith of Job and to hear God’s response to the humanly incomprehensible tragedy of his life, we must take time to consider the repeated messages of disaster received by Job and to weigh the arguments of Job’s friends. All this

60. Chapter 2, article 2; see above, 16–17.

61. Also, the decree of Vatican Council II, *Dei Verbum*, in 1965 [ed.].

is implied in the Founder's selection of this text to explain the third effect of faith in the life of a Brother. It would create in the Brother a solid foundation for his vocation and the beginning of a devotion to the Scriptures as the foundation for a spirit of faith, the spirit of the Institute.

## A Study of Chapter 16 of Our Rule

### 1. The Text and Its Place in the Rule

This chapter is not in the Rule of 1705 but was introduced into the Rule of 1718 by De La Salle after he received the revisions made by the Brothers who gathered together in 1717. The chapter, with only minor changes, occurs in all subsequent editions of the Rule up to and including that of 1947.

The manuscript Rule of 1705 is divided into four parts that are separated by a blank page on the left and that have a subtitle for each part on the top of the right-hand page. The subtitle of the first part repeats the general title, *Rule of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools*; the second part is subtitled, "Rules Concerning Special Virtues"; these are given in separate chapters on poverty, chastity, obedience, and silence; the third subtitle, "Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute," introduces the chapters on illnesses, travel, letters, and the Latin language; the fourth subtitle is "Daily Exercises for School Communities," which becomes the *Coutumier* (regulations for the local community).

When De La Salle was asked by the Brothers to take their revisions and write the Rule for them, he decided to add a chapter on the topic of regularity (observance of the Rule) and to place it at the head of the second part of the Rule of 1705 to give the fundamental insight and the principle for observance of all the virtues and practices that would follow. He is at the veritable summit of his understanding of the Society he had founded, and now at the end of his life, he expresses his keen awareness of what is of capital importance in the structure and the legislation that he has created.

In treating the virtue of regularity in the 1711 edition of the *Collection*, De La Salle had expressed the need for an attitude of faith in the various practices of the Rule: "Even in those lesser practices which appear of trivial consequence, be most exact through a simple view of faith alone because you perceive in them God's holy will."<sup>62</sup> But when

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62. *Collection*, 69.

he came to the revision of the Rule in 1717, he sensed the exceptional importance of the moment and the need to insert a statement at the beginning of this part of the Rule that would focus our attention and attitude toward all the practices of the Rule that follow. To do this he had recourse to the beginning of the Rule of Saint Augustine.

## 2. The Citation of Saint Augustine

Chapter 16 begins with these words:

It is necessary that the Brothers apply to themselves and take for the foundation and support of their regularity what Saint Augustine says at the beginning of his Rule: those who live in a Community ought before all else to love God and then their neighbor because these are the principal commandments given us by God and because any regularity whatever, if separated from the observance of these two commandments, is quite useless for salvation, for regularity is established in Communities only to give their members the facility to observe the commandments of God with exactness, and most of the rules are practices pertaining to the commandments.<sup>63</sup>

## 3. The Voice of Tradition

The introduction of the Rule of Saint Augustine has come down from the fifth century through a tradition preserved by numerous religious foundations of men and women. It is, in fact, very much a part of the earlier tradition of monasticism. Both the Rule of Saint Pachomius, who established the first monastery around 318 in Egypt, and the Rule of Saint Basil, who established the first monastery for the Eastern Church in Asia Minor around the year 357, emphasize the fundamental importance of the double precept of love of God and of neighbor.

Saint Benedict's Rule, written around 530, is even more explicit in declaring love of God and love of neighbor as the basic rule for monks. In chapter 4 of the Rule for Monks, he answers the question, "What are the instruments of good works?" He writes: "Above all, it is to love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and then your neighbor as yourself."<sup>64</sup> No matter where we open the Rule of Saint Benedict, every chapter makes it clear that the essential ingredient of holiness is charity.

63. Chapter 16, article 1; see above, 68.

64. *Rule of Saint Benedict*, chapter 4, article 1.

#### 4. Charity: the Purpose of Observance of the Rule

If we read carefully the entire chapter 16, the words *foundation*, *support*, *immovable*, and *destruction* can all suggest the architectural image of a building. De La Salle may be asking us to consider his work—and ours—in the framework of a construction. This comparison can be used in an effort to understand and achieve conformity between his ideas, his work, and ours.

The establishment of a religious institute is, in effect, a great construction. The Founder is, after God, the initial architect, and he well knows that he will leave an edifice that is in the process of fulfillment. All his followers must take charge of part of the project by providing the materials and the workers, but with full respect for the plans laid down if they want the development of the building to be solid and harmoniously united. The Rule will be the document by which the followers will express their loyalty to the one who first engaged in the project. It will tie the best of his experience and wisdom to the work of those who are continuing the construction, and it will be a kind of blueprint for the direction and the details of the structure that is to be achieved.

The Founder lays down the foundation when he writes that regularity is the principal support of the religious life but that regularity, in turn, must be based on the observance of the commandments, especially the two great commandments of love. On this foundation those erecting the structure must take care to place the different stories of the building according to the original plan and the materials chosen by the architect. The foundation of the building is of primary concern: because each level of the building is the immediate support of the next level, the weight of the whole structure must rest on the foundation.

“It is necessary that the Brothers apply to themselves and take for the foundation and support of their regularity. . . .” This abrupt beginning of chapter 16 introduces at once the precept of all monastic tradition, “Those who live in a Community ought before all else to love God and then their neighbor.”<sup>65</sup> This article does not simply present the law of charity as part of the Gospel but makes it the first concern of “those who live in a Community.” It states that the primacy of charity, the incontestable demand of this divine commandment, must be recognized and obeyed “before all else.” On this foundation every bit of the observance of the Rule must stand. The question is not, then, only a matter of caring for charity but far more a demand of the

65. Chapter 16, article 1; see above, 68.

first and fundamental commandment of the Lord. It must be the conviction of the workers that no detail of the construction can ever be carried out without this indispensable ingredient.

There can be no contradiction between any observance of the Rule and what the precept of charity requires. Observance of the Rule of itself cannot be defined or concerned with anything other than an expression and a safeguard of the primacy of charity. What the Rule seeks “before all else” is precisely the fidelity to the twofold precept of the Gospel. To make sure that no one misunderstands the seriousness of his statement, De La Salle insists that “any regularity whatever, if separated from the observance of these two commandments, is quite useless for salvation.”<sup>66</sup>

This is an appropriate statement by the Founder, for it is not altogether rare to find a counterfeit religious, who is ultra-solicitous and impeccable in observance of regulations, filled with a scrupulous anxiety for a very exact fidelity to the letter of the Rule, but at the same time has no concern for the fundamental duties of fraternal friendship or for the mutual support and assistance of his Brothers and lives in total disregard for the most elementary duties of justice and civility. How important it is to be on guard against becoming a person who does not aim at growth in charity but is vainly preoccupied with improving the observance of the Rule! The more such a person multiplies the details of observance, the more he endangers the balance of the whole structure of his life, hinders the work of the community, and threatens its downfall, let alone any hope of putting up a crowning tower to the edifice. There is no hope of constructing a tall building without a good foundation.

This prescription of the Rule, stated at the beginning, is valid for all times. No matter how much construction goes on, regardless of the amount of effort and the extensions that may be added, it is essential that the fundamental foundation be deepened, enlarged, and strengthened. *Foundation* and *support* are the words used by the Rule: not verbiage but an insistence on the meaning of the words. Any framework that rises above the foundation will give stability and solidity to the entire structure only to the degree that it comes from a strong connection to the core of its foundation. The Founder says that “regularity is established in Communities only to give their members the facility to observe the commandments of God with exactness, and most of the rules are practices pertaining to the commandments.”<sup>67</sup>

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66. Chapter 16, article 1; see above, 68.

67. *Ibid.*



He illustrates this in his references to the chapters on silence, recreation, obedience, union with the Brothers, relations with the world, modesty, chastity, and recollection. The fact that De La Salle stresses this principle brings it into harmony with the Rule of Saint Benedict, which states, “We must prepare our hearts and our bodies for the battle of holy obedience to the commandments of the Lord. . . . What we have imposed is only with a desire to correct our vices and perfect our charity.”<sup>68</sup> In our Rule we find “the principal help to observe the commandments of God and the principal support against all the temptations of the devil.”<sup>69</sup>

With the edifice of the Institute solidly rooted in this *terra firma*, the building can be raised up, walls and facade added little by little. There is no risk in the projection of the plans. The “exterior” and “interior” supports of the Institute and the themes of the “ten commandments” that are found in chapter 16 are the columns and pillars that will take on the challenge of balancing the building. They will be the important building materials in the everyday practices of the Brothers. Around them and inserted in them are stones of every shape and size that will be part of the structure.

With confidence the designer of the building will take a moment to view his work. He points out some of the everyday actions without which the work will never achieve completion. “The Brothers will leave everything at the first sound of the bell.” “No Brother will absent himself from the daily exercises.” “They will be careful to close all the doors of the house quietly.”<sup>70</sup> These are all wise reminders of the perfection in the details, even as the focus is on the overall purpose of the building.

Although our building is rising on the universal foundation of the law of charity, it is important to note that it is a new edifice built for specific functions according to plan. Without in the least overlooking the value of other institutes, we must have a deliberate preference for the materials and forms required by the purpose and plan chosen for our Institute:

In this view, the Brothers will prefer the rules and practices of their Institute to all other practices, however holy they may be in themselves, unless they concern the commandments of God and of the Church.<sup>71</sup>

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68. *Rule of Saint Benedict*, prologue, articles 40, 47.

69. Chapter 16, article 2; see above, 68–69.

70. Chapter 16, articles 5, 6, and 7; see above, 69.

71. Chapter 16, article 3; see above, 69.

Our observance of the Rule, although it makes us different, distinguishes us from other religious, and gives us Brothers of the Christian Schools our own religious and professional obligations, does not dispense us from the duty of esteem for other practices in other forms of the religious life or in other Christian vocations. But for us it is certain that the observance of our Rule alone will be able to establish the religious life for us; without such observance our life would be without any support. Suppressing that concrete fact will at the same time bring about the destruction of the Community and the loss of its members.

When observance of the Rule is based on the solid foundation of the law of charity, it makes the highest structures immovable to the extent of their hold on that foundation. For those in a Community, it is the true way to live the observance of the commandments and of the Gospel counsels and to raise the love of precept to the perfection of love.

## 5. Charity: the Total Purpose of Observance of the Rule

The distinction between the precept of love and perfect love, between commandment and counsel, is not explicitly made in the Gospel. Moral theologians emphasize not only the primacy of the law of charity in the Gospel but also its open-ended call to the perfection of love, a move from a legal model of morality and Christian practice to a relational model that centers morality on the practice of love.

The Rule is a law embodying both precept and counsel. It is obligatory, limiting the liberty of whoever freely becomes subject to it. The law of the Rule, however, is the Gospel, the law of love, the inner substance that holds everything together and makes meaningless any constraint and austerity apart from this law. It is a law that has sovereign respect for human liberty because its aim is to unite the will of the Christian to the will of God in love. It is a set of practices with no other intention than to be an education in the practice of love, to prepare more and more for a greater union of the human will with the desires of God. If it is a Christian law, this must be its purpose, and it has no other authority than in the will of the person.

A strictly external observance of the Rule is no observance; if there is no love, there is no observance. To express the idea positively, the one thing the Rule must evoke in the mind and heart of the religious amid the multiplicity of its detailed articles is the law above all laws, the law of love. The preface of the *Constitutions* of the Jesuits is a good example of this fundamental principle of religious rules:

Although God our Creator and Lord is the one who in his Supreme Wisdom and Goodness must preserve, direct, and carry forward in his divine service this least Society of Jesus, just as he deigned to begin it; and although on our own part what helps most toward this end must be, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and imprints upon hearts; nevertheless, since the gentle disposition of Divine Providence requires cooperation from his creatures, and since too the vicar of Christ our Lord has ordered this, and since the examples given by the saints and reason itself teach us so in our Lord, we think it necessary that constitutions should be written to aid us to proceed better, in conformity with our Institute, along the path of divine service on which we have entered.<sup>72</sup>

This preface shows the primacy of the interior law of charity and love and also clearly affirms the relative need for a Rule in the search for a life of perfection. Although De La Salle expresses it somewhat differently in chapter 16, he makes his own the thinking of the Jesuits. He proposes nothing else for us but the observance of the two great commandments of the Lord. The Decalogue and the laws of the Church present the minimum requirements for all Christians to observe these great commandments; our Rule wishes to clarify how religious can observe these same commandments. It would be missing the true meaning of the Rule and make it “quite useless for salvation” if its observance were “separated from the observance of these two commandments,” which have been given to us by God.<sup>73</sup>

The Rule does not seek to burden us with arbitrary or redundant requirements; it seeks to impose nothing that will restrict the exercise of our rights as children of God. On the contrary, it assures us again and again in chapter 16 that it wants to facilitate the exercise of these rights, to educate us in the awareness of our Christian liberty so that we can achieve what is most personal in our lives, to live the law of charity effectively above every other law.

It is clear in all this that the Rule is the educator of the religious soul. In the everyday existence of a life vowed to God, it is by the Rule that we will acquire sensitivity to the action of the Spirit guiding us surely in the choice between the good and the better. The Rule teaches us that the least point of observance is an expression of our love for God, inspiring us to esteem even what seems insignificant.

72. *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, John W. Padberg, general editor (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 56.

73. Chapter 16, article 1; see above, 68.

This should lead us to desire to live in accord with our Rule because we know that we read in it a lesson of primary importance: our first duty is love. All the details of the text of the Rule have no other purpose than the one they propose, namely, love.

## 6. The Binding Force of the Rule

De La Salle does not speak of the precise level of obligation of the prescriptions of the Rule. He does not think it important to place observance or any fear of failure within a fear of committing sin. Instead, he appeals to generosity. Even when he praises in his other writings the merits of observing the Rule, he does not use terms of moral theology, of guilt about infractions. There is no doubt that for him observance is a matter of obligation, but we have no text in which he addresses the age-old question, “Do the prescriptions of the Rule in and of themselves oblige under pain of sin, and if not, in what way are they obligatory?”

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux taught the Cistercians of the twelfth century that they were bound to observe the details of their Rule under pain of sin. But since then, less rigorous teaching has often been proposed, though not always successful in putting conscientious religious at ease. In 1901, the Congregation of Bishops and Religious issued norms for the religious life that include this statement:

The Constitutions of religious orders must state that their prescriptions do not bind under pain of sin unless the religious transgresses them out of contempt or in matters that are contrary to their vows or to the precepts of God or of the Church.<sup>74</sup>

This is, in fact, the opinion that had become more and more common since the seventeenth century. We need to use discernment in applying this judgment to everyday practice; otherwise, it is possible to lose all sense of obligation in regard to the Rule. Because most of its prescriptions are borrowed from divine or ecclesiastical precepts, they do not add anything to the obligation already imposed. Although the Rule adds some precision aimed at helping us to be more faithful, it does not add a new obligation. For example, our Rule requires that we not speak of any Brother or of anyone else unless we speak well of the person. Nothing in this article goes beyond the commandments; it obliges in the same way as the commandments do. The prescription in the Rule, because it ought to increase our awareness of the divine

74. *Normae secundum quas S. C. EE et RR.*, Rome, 1901.

law, clearly makes failures less excusable, but it does not of itself increase the obligatory nature of the Rule.

The Rule can add to the fault of an act of laziness, but laziness that gives in to negligence is guilty independently of the Rule. The Rule will only be the occasion for the fault. If a transgression is voluntary, it is often the result of following a drive that has not been brought under full control. Giving scandal by transgressing the Rule is also a guilty act, but the level of wrong in such an act comes not from any binding force of the Rule that has been violated but from the scandal itself, which is an effect of the violation. Contempt for the Rule can also be sinful, not because of any binding force of the Rule but from the act of contempt, independently of the violation.

The question remains about what constitutes the true obligation of the Rule. There are prescriptions in the Rule that do not borrow from divine or Church law: for example, not to sing, wear a surplice, or perform any other function in church; to take recreation walking together; to make an act of adoration when entering a room in the house; to advertise one another of our faults once a week in the presence of the Brother Director. We know that there is some obligation in these prescriptions, and we know that our fidelity in observing them will determine our holiness and maintain our Institute on the path marked out for us by our Founder. For centuries, all religious orders in the Church have thought the same way, and it has been their fidelity to keep the Rule provided for them by their founder, often to the letter but living in its spirit, that has preserved their order, made their work fruitful, and sanctified them. The challenge of the Rule in each of its articles is to call attention more and more to the ideal of perfection, but what is the obligation?

A distinction is generally made between prescriptions that are directive and those that are prescriptive. The former call for habitual disposition of the will; for example, “The Brothers shall carefully and above all things apply themselves to become perfectly obedient.”<sup>75</sup> This article does not intend to be understood as a firm prescription of obedience. It would not be violated, then, except by habitual disregard for obedience.

Other prescriptions are more precise and insistent, taking on the character of a precept but not always on the same level of obligation. There is no uniform answer to the seriousness of the obligation, whether it is binding under pain of sin, unless, as in the case of the Cistercians, the writer of the Rule makes it clear. The *Constitutions* of the Dominicans takes a different stand:

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75. Rule of 1947, chapter 21, article 1.

Our *Constitutions* do not oblige under pain of sin but only under pain of punishment, unless the matter has been prescribed by other laws or by reason of the contempt that accompanies the violation.<sup>76</sup>

All other recent congregations have cited the 1901 *Norms* of the Congregation of Bishops and Religious.

De La Salle prefers to focus on the excellence of the Rule rather than on the seriousness of violating it. He writes that observance of the Rule is “the first means of sanctification” in a religious community, “the principal help to observe the commandments,” the utmost protection against temptations, and a special aid to obtain grace from God.<sup>77</sup> He writes similarly in the *Collection*. There is no indication that he thinks that violations of the Rule are venial sins or even imperfections. He is undoubtedly guided by the general teaching of the moral theologians of his time, which is also the teaching of Saint Francis de Sales and Saint Vincent de Paul. In 1726, when the Rule was published, there was a preface, probably written by someone outside the Institute, that expressed the same thought. In 1916, the Superior General, Brother Imier-de-Jésus, reiterated this position that had been the tradition for two centuries.

But the question remains: how does the Rule have the power of obligation? Several answers have been given, but none seems to be truly satisfying. Some commentators have considered the binding force to be penal, under pain of punishment. The religious is not bound in conscience. Failure results in a penance prescribed by the Rule or imposed by the superior, which in effect would remove any obligatory nature in the Rule.

Some have wanted all the prescriptions of the Rule to be binding by the vow of obedience. Saint Thomas Aquinas and many others do not agree. Although the vows are to be kept according to the Rule, it in no way follows that all the prescriptions of the Rule, many of them outside the matter of the vows, are part of the obligation of the vows. It seems better to accept the opinion of the Jesuit Rodrigo de Arriaga (†1667) that the Rule obliges under pain of imperfection; that is, violations in and of themselves are failures to be perfect. Theologians often use violations of the Rule as examples of imperfection.

We have to be on our guard against too rigorous a conclusion that it is impossible to violate the Rule without committing a venial

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76. *Monumenta Ordinis Praedicatorum Historica*, vol. 3; *Acta Capitulum Generalium*, vol. 1, 8.

77. Chapter 16, article 2; see above, 68–69.

sin. This is contrary to the general opinion and to the *Norms* already cited. We also have to be on guard against minimizing the obligation of the Rule or the effect of imperfections. The Founder makes clear in the *Collection* that willful imperfections can seriously injure our spiritual life.<sup>78</sup>

God, when he makes known his will, does not always command. Some precepts are imposed under pain of serious sin; others, of lesser sin, and there are also cases when God calls us to accomplish more perfectly his divine will. So there are failures that are only imperfections, which are regrettable but not such as to remove all goodness from an act.

The Rule asks me to “walk sedately . . . without overhaste, unless some necessity requires it.”<sup>79</sup> It is important that I give these words their true meaning. “Overhaste” implies a lack of moderation; the text then provides for a necessary exception. The necessity excuses me but also has a law of its own, such as charity or obedience, that makes me walk with haste, even with overhaste.

I am free in my actions to make a judgment about an exception to the Rule, but the Rule has for me a certain obligation that I must consider. To violate the Rule is in itself an imperfection. I have not acted as perfectly as I ought; I have deprived myself of some grace; I have risked weakening myself in the face of all my obligations. If either the drive that makes me act contrary to the Rule or the circumstances of my act are not good, I am guilty of a sin. It could even be a mortal sin, for example, if it came from a revolt against authority, a formal contempt for authority.

I can do something good in itself and offer it to God, but if not in complete accord with the Rule, it lacks the perfection it ought to have. To be in accord with the Rule, it would be more perfect for me, all other things being equal, not to do that act. The Rule becomes for me the opportunity to make an indifferent act good or even a good act better, just because it is in the Rule. Although there is no obligation under pain of sin to obey it, the Rule prodigiously multiplies for me the occasions of doing something better just because it is in the Rule.

This is why a precept of the Rule differs from a counsel. The value of a counsel is limited to its own acts, whereas a precept of the Rule makes all the ordinary acts of the day take on a greater merit as manifestations of generous love. The least of my actions, such as a response to the bell, becomes for me an occasion to show my eagerness to respond to grace, to show my love for God.

78. *Collection*, 46.

79. Chapter 21, article 11; see above, 82.

Thus, the Founder's thought about love as fundamental to all the details of our Rule is excellent. Although he does not go into the maze of our rationalizations concerning the obligation of our Rule, he does by a certain divine instinct know the vanity of such calculations about the pain of sin and imperfections. He raises our eyes to what is most important: the determination to do all our actions out of love.

## 7. Regulations and Practices in Community

The Rule of 1718, as does the edition of 1947, states: "Each of the Brothers will apply himself particularly to do nothing that is or could be contrary to the regularity and good order of the house."<sup>80</sup> The *Collection* also stresses this point. It is clear that De La Salle does not think that the Rule includes all our obligations. In his letters and meditations, he uses such expressions as "rules and resolutions," "rules and exercises," "rules and conduct," "rules and practices."

In one meditation he comments, "They lose their love for the rules and practices of the community [that is, the Institute], eventually grow disgusted with them, and carry them out only grudgingly."<sup>81</sup>

De La Salle, without going into detail, often mentions "practices" in his writings about the Brother's life. Some practices are mentioned specifically; for example, the Rule states that the Brothers ought not to have special devotions that are not those of the Institute,<sup>82</sup> also that the Brothers ought to regard as an indispensable practice the duty to inform the Brother Director privately of any considerable fault capable of causing scandal that any Brother or several Brothers have committed.<sup>83</sup> The *Collection* also speaks of community practices that are separate from the Rule, under the topic "We must maintain faithfulness to community practices."<sup>84</sup> Faithfulness to community practices is placed after faithfulness to the Rule and before fidelity in religious obedience.

De La Salle makes no distinction between the practices written in the Rule and those that are unwritten. When he learns that Gabriel Drolin intends to take the tonsure in Rome, he writes to tell him, "You know, of course, that this is contrary to Institute practice."<sup>85</sup> The Rule of 1705 makes no mention of the tonsure, but De La Salle does not

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80. Chapter 16, article 4; see above, 69.

81. *Meditations*, 12.3.

82. Chapter 4, article 12; see above, 24.

83. Chapter 5, article 13; see above, 27.

84. *Collection*, 50.

85. *Letters*, 28.24.



need to refer to the Rule; it is sufficient to refer to the practices of the Institute. In the Rule of 1718, the chapter on obedience states that the Brothers “may copy hymns, the rules and practices of the Institute, arithmetic, catechism, and all that may be of use in the Community.”<sup>86</sup>

The Founder makes no distinction between primary and secondary importance when speaking of the Rule and the practices of the Institute. In his *Memorandum on the Habit*,<sup>87</sup> he states that fidelity to the practices, usages, and points of Rule is one of the principal supports of the Institute. It seems clear that when the Founder writes *rules* with a small letter, as he often does, he is referring to unwritten practices that are preserved by example and by word of mouth.

The *Coutumier* is one type of written collection of practices and regulations that is more detailed than the Rule. Its aim is to carry out the prescriptions of the Rule in particular places and at specific times. In the Rule of 1705, the general rules are followed by “Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute,” including chapters on the care of the sick, travel, letters, Latin, and the schedule for the daily exercises, as well as the schedule for Sundays, feasts, school holidays, the school vacation, and the annual retreat. De La Salle here follows the monastic tradition of legislating all the prescriptions and details of the Brother’s life. The Rule of 1718 combines all these final chapters into chapters 22 to 32. In this way the two elements—the Rule and the practices—are connected as of equal importance in the life of the Institute.

In the Rule of 1705, the chapter entitled “The Exercises of Humiliation and Mortification Practiced in This Institute” begins:

There will be no corporal mortification of Rule in this Institute. They will, however, retain the practice that has always been observed of abstinence from meat on the Saturdays from Christmas to the feast of the Purification.<sup>88</sup>

Here is a joining of a principle of the Rule with a practice. The principle is of permanent value; the practice refers to a transitory attitude, applicable only in specific circumstances regarding the observance of the Rule.

It is not surprising that over the past two hundred years there have been numerous changes in these practices of the Institute originally recorded in the final chapters of the Rule. Such is the nature of

86. Chapter 20, article 4; see above, 76.

87. *Mémoire sur l’Habit*, Cahiers lasalliens 5, 256–62; see above, 181–91.

88. Chapter 5, article 1; see above, 25.

human history. Even Saint Benedict foresaw that changes would probably be made for the better in the recitation of the Divine Office. This is the purpose of regular meetings such as the local and general chapters of the members of an order: to make adaptations according to the changing circumstances of time and the conditions of life. In 1717, when the Founder called sixteen Brothers together to revise the Rule of 1705, they were following a well-established monastic tradition, and the Brothers in 1725 had another task of revision after the pope gave the Institute official recognition by the Church.

The Rule of 1705 and that of 1718 are only in manuscript form; when the edition of 1725 was printed in 1726, it required careful study to eliminate textual variations and errors in the original manuscripts. When each new edition came out in the succeeding years throughout the nineteenth century, there was always an effort to capture the primitive spirit, not just the text. The evolution of human history demands this kind of adaptation of practice and language to preserve the fundamental principles of an institution. What happens is that practices may change, but the original charism of the Founder is preserved.

Religious orders have always recognized the authority of the Church in regulating the life of the community. To have the vows conform to canon law, the approbation of the Church in 1725 changed the ones that had been taken previously. Similarly, the decree *Quemadmodum* in 1890 altered the manner in which a Brother would hold his interview with the Brother Director, dispensing him from the obligation to tell the Director his sins. Also, to adjust to the needs of the schools, in 1923 the pope requested a change in the Rule on the teaching of Latin.

We can see Providence in the way that the fundamental articles of our Rule have remained unchanged. Chapter 2, “The Spirit of This Institute,” and chapter 16, “Regularity,” which are the most significant products of the Founder’s thought, have come down to us unchanged. Equally true to De La Salle’s thinking are the articles in the other twenty chapters that have hardly been modified at all. There can be no surprise in the fact that the articles on the manner in which the Brothers are to behave when obliged to punish their pupils have been reworded. More than any other topic, this one has undergone important revision, yet the fundamental spirit of the Founder on the subject has remained unchanged: his deep respect and even tenderness for the pupils.

In summary, we can say that the changes in the Rule over the years have been changes in the practices, not in the Rule. As we saw

above in the example of Brother Gabriel Drolin and the tonsure, changes have been made over time. In 1705, the wording specified that the Brothers “cannot be priests or aspire to the ecclesiastical state, or even sing, wear a surplice, or exercise any function in church.” In 1718, a change was made by adding the words “except to serve low Mass.”<sup>89</sup> In 1901, additional changes were made by specifying that “the Brothers ought not to sing from the lectern, be soloists, or be the organist in church, but they may sing there with their pupils.”<sup>90</sup> In 1947, the article ends more simply with the words, “except to serve low Mass and sing with their pupils.”<sup>91</sup>

These changes illustrate how practices may be changed without altering the basic principle of the Rule. Both carry equal obligation of observance, but one is immutable; the other is subject to change. In his letter to Gabriel Drolin, De La Salle does not seem to think that Gabriel is aspiring to the priesthood, which would violate the Rule, but he makes it clear that Gabriel is violating a practice of the Institute to which he has an obligation, and it would put him in danger of a more serious violation.

In conclusion, our study of the historical background of the Rule, of the significant additions made by De La Salle in 1718, and of the minor changes that have been made in the practices of the Institute during the last 250 years makes clear the richness of our heritage, the wisdom of our Founder, and the goodness of Divine Providence, which has guided the preservation of the essential prescriptions of the Rule down to our present day.

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89. Chapter 1, article 2; see above, 14.

90. *Règles Communes*, 1927, 93.

91. *Règles Communes*, 1947, article 3.



# Appendix 2

## Rule of the Brothers of the Christian Schools Chapter Numbers and Headings (Cahiers lasalliens 25)

Rule of 1705	Rule of 1718	Rule of 1726
The Purpose and the Necessity of This Institute	1. The Purpose and the Necessity of This Institute	I. The Purpose and the Necessity of This Institute
The Spirit of This Institute	2. The Spirit of This Institute	II. The Spirit of This Institute
The Spirit of Community in This Institute and the Exercises Performed in Common in It	3. The Spirit of Community in This Institute and the Exercises Performed in Common in It	III. The Spirit of Community in This Institute and the Exercises Performed in Common in It
The Exercises of Piety Practiced in This Institute	4. The Exercises of Piety Practiced in This Institute	IV. The Exercises of Piety Practiced in This Institute
The Exercises of Humiliation and Mortification Practiced in This Institute	5. The Exercises of Humiliation and Mortification Practiced in This Institute	V. The Exercises of Humiliation and Mortification Practiced in This Institute
How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves During Recreation	6. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves During Recreation	VI. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves During Recreation

Rule of 1705	Rule of 1718	Rule of 1726
<p>Topics on Which the Brothers Ought to Converse During Recreation</p>		
<p>How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School</p>	<p>7. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Their Pupils</p>	<p>VII. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Their Pupils</p>
	<p>8. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils</p>	<p>VIII. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves When Correcting Their Pupils</p>
	<p>9. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Themselves, Their Brothers, and Outsiders</p>	<p>IX. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves in School with Regard to Themselves, Their Brothers, and Outsiders</p>
	<p>10. The Days and Times When the Brothers Will Teach School and the Days on Which They Will Give a Holiday to Their Pupils</p>	<p>X. The Days and Times When the Brothers Will Teach School and the Days on Which They Will Give a Holiday to Their Pupils</p>
<p>The Inspector of Schools</p>	<p>11. The Inspector of Schools</p>	<p>XI. The Inspector of Schools</p>
<p>How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to the Brother Director</p>	<p>12. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to the Brother Director</p>	<p>XII. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to the Brother Director</p>
<p>How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves Toward One Another</p>	<p>13. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves Toward One Another; the Union That Ought to Exist Among Them</p>	<p>XIII. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves Toward One Another; the Union That Ought to Exist Among Them</p>

<b>Rule of 1705</b>	<b>Rule of 1718</b>	<b>Rule of 1726</b>
How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders	14. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders	XIV. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders
	15. How the Serving Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves	XV. How the Serving Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves
	16. Regularity	XVI. Regularity
		XVII. The Vows
		XVIII. Obligations of the Vows
Rules Concerning Special Virtues		
Poverty	17. Poverty	XIX. Poverty
Chastity	19. Chastity	XX. Chastity
Obedience	20. Obedience	XXI. Obedience
Silence	Chapter on Silence	XXII. Silence
	21. Modesty	XXIII. Modesty
Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute	Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute	Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute
Illnesses	22. The Sick	XXIV. The Sick
Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers	23. Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers	XXV. Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers
Travel	24. Travel	XXVI. Travel
Letters	25. Letters	XXVII. Letters
The Latin Language	26. The Latin Language	XXVIII. The Latin Language

Rule of 1705	Rule of 1718	Rule of 1726
How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders	14. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders	XIV. How the Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves with Regard to Outsiders
	15. How the Serving Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves	XV. How the Serving Brothers Ought to Conduct Themselves
	16. Regularity	XVI. Regularity
		XVII. The Vows
		XVIII. Obligations of the Vows
Rules Concerning Special Virtues		
Poverty	17. Poverty	XIX. Poverty
Chastity	19. Chastity	XX. Chastity
Obedience	20. Obedience	XXI. Obedience
Silence	Chapter on Silence	XXII. Silence
	21. Modesty	XXIII. Modesty
Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute	Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute	Rules Concerning the Good Order and Management of the Institute
Illnesses	22. The Sick	XXIV. The Sick
Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers	23. Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers	XXV. Prayers to Be Said for Deceased Brothers
Travel	24. Travel	XXVI. Travel
Letters	25. Letters	XXVII. Letters
The Latin Language	26. The Latin Language	XXVIII. The Latin Language



Rule of 1705	Rule of 1718	Rule of 1726
		Regulations for Daily Exercises
Daily Exercises for the School Communities	27. Daily Exercises	XXIX. Daily Regulations
Special Exercises for Sundays and Feasts in the School Communities	28. Special Exercises for Sundays and Feasts	XXX. Special Exercises for Sundays and Feasts
Special Exercises for Holidays in the School Communities	29. Special Exercises for Holidays	XXXI. Special Exercises for Holidays
	30. Special Practices of the Daily Exercises on Certain Days of the Year	XXXII. Exercises on the First Day of School After Vacation and on the Feast of All Saints, the Commemoration of the Dead, and the Vigil and the Feast of Christmas
		XXXIII. Exercises on Ember Days, the Vigil and the Day of Ash Wednesday, and the Feast of Saint Mathias, of the Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin, and of Saint Joseph
		XXXIV. The Last Three Days of Holy Week
		XXXV. The Days of Easter, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, and Feasts That Are Not Public Holidays
Regulations for Vacation Time	31. Daily Regulations for Vacation Time	XXXVI. Regulations for Vacation, for Days That Are Holidays and Days That Are Not Holidays, and for the Time of Retreat
Exercises for the House of the Novitiate		

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# Index

This general index includes the community exercises, the documents, the persons, the prayers, and the other subjects mentioned in the Rule of 1705 or in the Rule of 1718. Because of their frequent occurrence, the terms *Brother* and *Brother Director* are not indexed.

## A

- absence, 22, 52, 53, 57, 69, 95
- abstinence, 25, 117, 118, 120
- account of conduct, 27, 28, 34, 48, 55, 61, 69, 80, 93, 94
- accusation of faults, 26, 34, 69, 79, 100, 103, 105, 108, 115, 124, 127, 130, 143, 144, 145
- acquaintance, 91
- Acts of the Apostles, 100
- administration, 29
- admonition, 55, 56
- adoration, 17, 24, 70, 76, 110, 121, 128, 129, 133, 141
- Advent, 111, 118
- advertisement of defects, 26, 27, 34, 69, 79, 129, 145
- advice, 22, 55, 64, 94, 133
- affability, 75
- affection, 39, 58, 67, 83
- agony, 84
- All Saints Day, 113, 120
- All Souls Day (Commemoration of the Dead), 50, 114
- Angels, Holy Guardian, 23
- Angelus*, 105, 110
- anger, 42
- anniversary, 86, 88
- Annunciation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, 119
- Anointing of the Sick, 84
- anxiety, 83
- Apocalypse, 103
- arithmetic, 37, 76, 99, 110, 137
- arms, 46, 82
- Ash Wednesday, 50, 121, 134
- assiduity, 112, 135
- association, 91, 141
- Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, 120
- attention, 16, 18, 36, 41, 46, 47, 84
- attitude, 55
- Augustine, Saint, 68
- authority; of God, 53, 55; persons in, 48, 81
- Ave Maria*, 37
- aversion, 18

## B

back, 42  
 bell, 66, 69, 76, 85, 97, 102, 103,  
 105, 109, 110, 111, 115, 116,  
 117, 119, 120, 122, 123, 131,  
 138, 140, 143, 144, 145, 146  
 benches, 47  
 benefactors, 88, 89  
 benefit, 15, 34, 112, 143  
 Bible history, 103, 125, 126  
*Binet, Father*, 111  
 bishop, 79  
 Blessed Sacrament, 110, 121,  
 128, 133, 134  
 boarders, 64  
 body, 27, 30, 52, 55, 68, 77, 79,  
 81, 82, 141  
*Book of Prayers Said in the  
 Christian Schools, The*, 119  
 books, 38, 45, 76, 77, 88, 96, 99,  
 101, 103, 108, 111, 125, 139,  
 143  
 bow, 24, 53, 54  
 bread, 25, 66  
 breakfast, 97, 99, 100, 104, 110,  
 137, 139, 142, 146  
 breeches, 74  
 Brother Assistant, 64  
 Brother Sub-Director, 53, 61  
 Brother Superior, 21, 26, 37, 51,  
 53, 59, 62, 64, 65, 66, 68, 70,  
 71, 76, 79, 82, 84, 86, 90, 92,  
 93, 94, 95, 98, 110, 111, 133,  
 141, 145  
 Brother Visitor, 27  
 Brother; use of the name, 13  
 Brothers of the Christian  
 Schools, 12, 70, 141  
 burial, 85

## C

calotte, 24, 27, 53, 54, 56, 58  
 care, carefulness, 14, 15, 16, 17,  
 18, 20, 27, 30, 31, 35, 37, 41,  
 42, 45, 46, 49, 55, 58, 64, 66,  
 67, 69, 70, 74, 75, 76, 80, 82,  
 83, 84, 89, 91, 92, 95, 97, 109,  
 117, 134  
 Cassian, Saint, 32, 136  
 catechism, 35, 37, 43, 44, 47, 50,  
 76, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 105,  
 106, 108, 109, 110, 112, 113,  
 114, 115, 117, 119, 120, 121,  
 122, 123, 131, 132, 133, 135,  
 136, 137, 138, 143, 144  
 charity, 43, 67  
 Charles (Borromeo), Saint, 33  
 chastity, 70, 74  
 cheerfulness, 81  
 childhood, 15, 32  
 children, 14, 15, 18, 19, 32, 35,  
 49, 100, 101  
 Christian: duties, 37; education,  
 14, 101; gentleness, 43; life, 14;  
 maxims, 14, 35; Schools, 14,  
 15, 70, 112, 119, 141; simplici-  
 ty, 58; spirit, 19, 35, 112, 113  
 Christmas, 25, 50, 115, 116, 117,  
 120, 131, 132, 136  
*Christus factus est*, 124, 127  
 Circumcision, 117  
 city, 44, 49, 51, 57, 67, 80, 91  
 civility, 58, 62  
 class (in school), 43, 45, 47, 52,  
 72, 99, 121, 135, 136  
 classrooms, 44, 45, 47, 52  
 cleanliness, 82, 143  
 clothing, 71, 72, 74, 82  
*Collection of Penances*, 26  
 commandments: of God and of  
 the Church, 37, 56, 68, 69; of  
 the Institute, 33, 70

commands, 55, 56, 76  
 common room, 20, 26, 98, 102,  
 103, 107, 110, 129, 130, 143  
 communication, 47, 55, 62, 67,  
 68, 100  
 Communion, 22, 23, 25, 86, 87,  
 88, 104, 109, 110, 112, 114,  
 116, 122, 125, 130, 133, 136,  
 142, 145, 146  
 communities, 20, 23, 24, 25, 97,  
 102, 104, 109, 112, 113, 117  
 Community (Institute, Society),  
 16, 30, 33, 50, 51, 68, 69, 71,  
 76, 81, 97, 101, 117, 121, 122,  
 127, 133, 142  
 Compline, 107, 114, 119, 120,  
 123, 127, 129, 143, 146  
 conduct, 16, 19, 27, 28, 39, 52,  
 55, 75, 78, 92, 93, 94, 102, 135,  
 140  
*Conduct of the Christian Schools,*  
*The*, 37, 41, 43, 46, 99, 138  
 conference, 107, 108, 113, 126,  
 128, 130, 132, 133, 138, 139,  
 140, 143, 145  
 Confession, 24  
 confessor, 22, 89  
*Confiteor*, 37  
 confraternities, 24, 135  
 conscience, 27, 28, 33, 34, 55,  
 69, 140  
 control over the senses, 17  
 conversation, 30, 32, 62, 63, 75,  
 92, 111  
 corporal mortification, 25  
 Corpus Christi, 133  
 correction, 28, 36, 41, 42, 43, 46,  
 47, 59, 75, 140  
 countenance, 81  
 country, 91  
*Credo*, 37  
 cross, 50, 118, 129, 136

crucifix, 24, 71  
 custom, 18, 85

## D

*De Profundis*, 86, 87, 88  
 dead, the, 34, 84, 114  
 dead members, 16  
 death, 32, 84, 86, 87  
 decency, 72, 75  
 desks, 47  
 dessert, 25  
*Deus Indulgentium*, 86  
 devil, 68, 69, 84  
 devotions, 24, 32, 33  
 dignity, 45, 82  
 dining room. *See* refectory.  
 dinner, 19, 50, 100, 101, 105,  
 110, 111, 119, 122, 123, 125,  
 126, 129, 131, 132, 138, 140,  
 143, 147  
 dioceses, 117  
 Director of Novices, 53, 142,  
 143, 145  
*Directory for Giving an Account*  
*of Their Conduct*, 27, 28, 92, 93  
 discussion, 35, 92, 104, 139, 140  
 dismissal, 45, 100, 101, 106, 121,  
 123, 132  
 disobedience, 127  
 disorder, 15, 81  
 disposition, 28, 53, 55, 56, 65,  
 73, 100, 102, 105, 107, 109,  
 112, 122, 133  
 dissipation, 35, 67  
 distinction, 61, 81  
 Dominic, Saint, 33  
 doors, 47, 66, 67, 69  
 dormitory, 20, 97, 103, 144  
 drink, 30, 79, 91, 92  
 duties, 18, 27, 35, 37, 67, 128



## E

Easter, 50, 99, 122, 131, 136  
 eating, 20, 27, 30, 66, 79, 92, 117  
 ecclesiastical state, 14  
 edification, 30, 34, 35, 82, 91, 92  
 education, 14, 33, 101  
 Ember Days, 118  
 employment, 18, 63, 66, 70, 118  
 epigrams, 40, 117, 118  
 Epistles, 103  
 errands, 39, 67  
 esteem, 59, 60, 68  
 Eucharist. *See* Blessed Sacrament.  
 Evangelists, 33, 125  
 evening prayer. *See* prayer:  
 evening.  
 Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 50,  
 118, 136  
 examen, particular, 23, 69, 70,  
 97, 100, 102, 105, 109, 110,  
 119, 122, 125, 129, 131, 138,  
 139, 140, 143, 146  
 exercises. *See* spiritual exercises.  
 expenses, 21, 38, 66, 67, 72, 92  
 explanation, 37, 46, 63, 104, 122,  
 125, 130, 143  
 exterior supports of the Insti-  
 tute, 34, 69  
 externs. *See* outsiders.  
 eyes, 21, 31, 68, 81; of faith, 16

## F

face, 42, 75, 81  
 faith, 16, 17, 33, 34, 56, 69, 70,  
 76, 141  
 familiarity, 35, 38, 42, 58, 67, 75,  
 91  
 fast days, fasting, 25, 100, 102,  
 118, 119, 120  
 fathers, 14  
 faults, 22, 26, 27, 28, 34, 35, 100,  
 102, 103, 105, 143

feast days, 19, 23, 25, 37, 38, 50,  
 51, 104, 107, 108, 113, 114,  
 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120,  
 121, 122, 123, 131, 132, 133,  
 134, 135, 136, 137, 141, 145  
 feelings, 30, 41  
 feet, 28, 31, 42, 82, 90, 91  
 ferule, 42, 43  
 fervor, 34  
*Fidelium*, 114  
*Flower of Examples, The*, 111  
 food, 91, 92, 129  
 forehead, 81  
 Francis de Sales, Saint, 33  
 Francis of Assisi, Saint, 33  
 Francis Xavier, Saint, 33  
 freedom, 59, 68, 84, 91  
 French, 36, 37, 98, 143  
 friendship, 38, 62, 94  
 Friday, 25, 26, 50, 118, 120, 124,  
 126, 128, 129, 137  
 funeral, 89  
 furniture, 47

## G

garden, 24, 102, 140, 142, 143  
 gentleness, 35, 43  
 gestures, 31, 60, 82  
 gifts, 117, 118  
 girls, 49  
*Gloria Patri*, 127  
 God, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 30, 32,  
 34, 37, 42, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59,  
 66, 68, 69, 70, 76, 77, 79, 84,  
 95, 112, 113, 127  
 Good Friday, 124, 128, 129  
 Gospel, 19, 37, 100, 126, 139  
 government, 17, 141  
 grace, 16, 33, 56, 59, 70, 84, 112,  
 113; before and after meals, 124  
 Gratuitous Schools, 13, 36, 70,  
 141

gravity, 26, 81  
 guidance, 14, 17, 18, 70, 100,  
 112, 113, 146

## H

habits, 15  
 hands, 38, 42, 45, 82, 85, 124  
 handwriting, 36, 98, 99, 110, 143  
 harshness, 35  
 harvest, 51  
 hat, 56, 72  
 head, 42, 81, 82  
 heart, 34, 55, 70, 97  
 heaven, 32, 70  
 hell, 32  
 holidays, 21, 23, 37, 50, 51, 99,  
 109, 111, 114, 115, 119, 121,  
 123, 131, 134, 135, 136, 137,  
 146  
 holy card, 73  
 Holy Saturday, 118, 120, 123, 130  
 Holy Spirit, 18, 112, 113, 135, 141  
 Holy Thursday, 28, 124, 126  
 Holy Week, 50, 120, 123, 126, 131  
 homes, private, 90, 106, 117  
 honor, 54, 58, 70  
 hospitals, 83  
 household, 21  
 house(s), 20, 21, 24, 29, 36, 38,  
 44, 48, 51, 52, 53, 57, 59, 60, 61,  
 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 69, 71, 72,  
 76, 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 87, 88,  
 89, 90, 92, 94, 95, 96, 100, 101,  
 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, 111,  
 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120,  
 122, 123, 128, 129, 131, 132,  
 133, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146  
 human, 18  
 humiliation, 25, 26  
 humility, 54, 81, 95, 127  
 hymns, 76, 101, 128

## I

ideas, 18  
 Ignatius Loyola, Saint, 7, 33  
 Ignatius Martyr, Saint, 33  
 illness, 20, 25, 54, 77, 83, 84, 91  
*Imitation of Christ, The*, 71, 91,  
 98, 101, 103, 109, 122, 129, 131  
 immodesty, 74  
 impatience, 35, 42  
 impulse, 18  
 impurity, 34  
*Inclina, Domine*, 86, 87, 88  
 income, 73  
 infirmarian, 83, 84  
 infirmity. *See* illness.  
 ink, 38  
 inkwell, 72  
 innocence, 18  
 inns, 90  
 Inspector of Schools, 43, 48, 52  
 Institute (*see also* Society), 13, 14,  
 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26,  
 29, 33, 36, 37, 39, 51, 53, 57,  
 59, 62, 63, 64, 69, 71, 74, 76,  
 78, 80, 83, 84, 86, 90, 91, 92,  
 93, 94, 95, 96, 98, 110, 143, 145  
 instruction, 14, 15, 18, 19, 33, 35,  
 39, 99, 112, 113, 143  
 intention, 18, 26, 64, 84, 118, 132  
 interior (*see also* prayer, interior):  
 faults, 26; life, 67, 140; recollec-  
 tion, 34, 69; spirit, 34; supports  
 of the Institute, 69, 81; union,  
 60  
 irregularity, 69  
 irritation, 41

## J

James, Saint, 68  
 Jesus Christ, 32, 50, 67, 71, 84,  
 91, 97, 98, 100, 101, 103, 104,  
 109, 110, 114, 116, 122, 124,

Jesus Christ (*continued*), 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 136, 137, 139, 142  
 “Jesus, poor and abject,” 124  
 Job, 17  
 John the Baptist, Saint, 33  
 John the Evangelist, Saint, 33, 126, 128, 130, 139  
 Joseph, Saint, 32, 51, 101, 105, 111, 117, 121, 123, 123, 126, 131, 133, 136, 138, 140, 143, 146  
 journey (*see also* travel), 72, 90, 92  
*Jube, Domne*, 124  
 judgment, 32, 69

### K

kindness, 84, 94

### L

Last Supper, 125  
 laughter, 31  
 Latin, 36, 64, 96, 98, 143  
 Lauds, 88, 113, 114, 116, 142  
 legs, 82  
 Lent, 25, 50, 111, 118, 119, 120, 122  
 lessons (in school), 36, 43, 45, 46, 109, 144  
 letters, 36, 39, 63, 93, 94, 95, 98, 99, 143  
 levity, 31, 46  
 liberty, 68, 75, 77  
 life: Christian, 14; interior, 67, 140; of a saint, 101; of Jesus Christ, 32; of the Brother, 16, 86, 95, 141; of Mary, 32  
 litany, 44, 104, 105  
 Litany: of Saint Joseph, 101, 105, 111, 117, 123, 126, 131, 138, 140, 143, 146; of the Holy

Infant Jesus, 100, 104, 110, 114, 116, 122, 126, 137, 139, 142; of the Passion of Our Lord, 124, 127; of the Saints, 118, 130, 132  
 “Live, Jesus, in our hearts!”, 97, 98  
 livelihood, 14  
 lives, 14, 17, 32, 33, 68, 70, 72, 78, 89, 94, 134  
 lodging, 64, 90, 91, 92  
 love, 22, 30, 33, 38, 68, 70, 113  
 Luke, Saint, 126

### M

mantle, 72  
 Mark, Saint, 126, 132  
 martyrs, 84  
*Martyrs of Japan, The*, 111  
 Mary. *See* Most Blessed Virgin.  
 Mass, 14, 37, 50, 86, 87, 88, 97, 98, 100, 104, 105, 109, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 119, 121, 122, 125, 128, 130, 131, 133, 134, 135, 137, 139, 142, 145, 146  
 Master of Novices. *See* Director of Novices.  
 Mathias, Saint, 119  
 Matins, 88, 113, 114, 116, 142  
 Matthew, Saint, 125, 139  
 maxims: Christian, 14, 35; Gospel, 19, 37; of the saints, 33; untrue, 59  
 meals (*see also* breakfast, dinner, supper), 20, 21, 25, 26, 79, 86, 87, 88, 99, 124, 125, 126  
 meat, 25, 66, 117  
 meditation, 70, 98  
 members, 13, 16, 68, 69  
 method: of instruction, 36; of interior prayer, 34  
 mimicry, 30

mind, 18, 33, 46, 53, 67, 70, 82, 84  
*Miserere*, 124  
 mistake, 24  
 modesty, 20, 28, 31, 39, 46, 58, 68, 74, 75, 81, 82, 108  
 monasteries, 90  
 Monday, 25, 50, 120, 137  
 money, 38, 66, 72, 73, 92  
 morning prayer. *See* prayer: morning.  
 mortification, 25, 33  
 Most Blessed Virgin, 32, 50, 51, 107, 114, 115, 119, 120, 122, 123, 136, 142, 143, 146  
 Most Holy Trinity, 50, 131, 132, 133, 141  
 mothers, 14, 75  
 motives, 16, 18, 76  
 mysteries: of Jesus Christ, 32, 136; of religion, 14, 19, 105, 106, 109; of the Most Blessed Virgin, 115

**N**

names, 13, 42, 56, 84, 135  
 neatness, 82  
 necessity, 13, 14, 15, 20, 22, 35, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 51, 56, 57, 58, 60, 62, 66, 68, 69, 71, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 94, 96, 97  
 neighbor, 33, 35, 68, 82  
 New Testament, 17, 45, 71, 91, 98, 100, 102, 103, 104, 122, 123, 125, 126, 129, 130, 137, 142  
 news, 40  
 Nicolas, Saint, 50, 114, 115  
 night, 64, 83  
 night prayer. *See* prayer: night.  
 None, 124, 128, 130, 143, 145,

146  
 notes, 39, 95  
 nourishment, 83  
 novices, 16, 23, 29, 53, 88, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146  
 novitiate, 5, 29, 36, 64, 71, 95, 142, 145, 146

**O**

*O Crux ave, spes unica*, 129  
*O Domina mea*, 98  
 obedience, 33, 35, 55, 56, 57, 59, 66, 68, 70, 76, 84, 95, 127, 140, 141  
 obligation, 22, 33, 34, 35, 39, 60, 74, 75, 94, 95  
 observance (of the Rule). *See* regularity.  
 offense, 95, 127  
 office, 21, 52  
 Office: Divine, 24, 96, 119, 123, 124, 127, 128, 129, 130, 145; of the Dead, 86, 87, 88, 113, 114; of the Most Blessed Virgin, 32, 107, 114, 120, 122, 123, 142, 143, 146  
 oratory, 24, 26, 54, 66, 79, 86, 87, 88, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 110, 114, 116, 124, 129, 130  
 order: good, 41, 46, 69, 83; of instruction, 37; of Brother Director, 44, 47, 52, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 63, 66, 73, 79, 82, 96; of Brother Superior, 51, 66, 82, 92, 98; of rank, 61; religious, 30  
 orders: of confessor, 22; of God, 17  
 outsiders, 21, 29, 48, 62, 63, 67, 94

## P

- paper(s), 38, 45, 76, 118, 135  
 pardon, exercise of, 28, 126, 127  
 parents, 38, 75, 78, 80, 89, 115, 135  
 parish, 49, 50, 51, 89, 104, 105, 106, 107, 111, 112, 114, 116, 121, 122, 128, 133, 134, 135, 136  
 parlor, 24  
 passion, 42, 46, 81  
 Passion of Our Lord Jesus  
   Christ, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130  
*Pater noster*, 37, 124  
 patience, 35, 84  
 Patriarchs, 17  
 patron saints, 32, 50, 51, 101, 114, 121, 122, 134, 135  
 Paul, Saint, 33  
 peace, 33, 70  
 penance, 26, 27  
 Penitential Psalms, 130  
 penknife, 72  
 pens, 38, 72  
 Pentecost, 50, 118, 120, 131, 136  
 perfection, 33, 34, 137  
 permission, 20, 24, 25, 27, 29, 39, 40, 44, 49, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 66, 67, 69, 76, 77, 78, 79, 83, 92, 94, 96, 117  
 Peter, Saint, 33  
 Philip Neri, Saint, 33  
 piety, 19, 22, 24, 34, 35, 101, 103, 135  
 pin, 38, 73  
 place, 14, 29, 30, 31, 39, 43, 44, 45, 47, 51, 53, 54, 57, 61, 76, 78, 91, 92, 106, 134, 141  
 playfulness, 31, 75  
 pointer, 42  
 politeness, 48, 63  
 poor, the, 14, 15, 39, 49, 86  
 post office, 94  
 postulants, 64  
 poverty, 71, 72, 85  
 practice lesson, 144  
 practices, 14, 18, 22, 24, 25, 27, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 55, 67, 68, 69, 70, 76, 81, 112, 118, 121, 143  
 prayer, 19; evening, 23, 28, 37, 47, 50, 66, 97, 101, 102, 115, 117, 120, 128, 130, 133, 138, 144; for deceased Brothers, 85, 86, 87, 88; for the dying, 84; in school, 37, 45, 46, 47, 50, 100, 113, 118, 119, 121, 123, 132; interior, 22, 23, 24, 28, 33, 34, 69, 70, 80, 88, 91, 97, 98, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 133, 134, 138, 139, 140, 142, 143, 145, 146; morning, 37, 44, 47, 80, 88, 100, 106, 112, 113, 114, 119, 124, 128, 130, 132, 136, 145; night, 103; vocal, 98, 116, 142  
 presence: of God, 18, 34, 69; of all the Brothers, 93; of Jesus Christ, 32; of the Brother Director, 26, 57, 62; of the pupils, 46  
 Presentation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, 50, 136  
 presents, 38  
 priesthood, 14  
 priests, 48, 49, 89, 112, 114, 118, 121  
 Prime, 124, 128, 130, 142  
 privacy, 20, 21, 24, 27, 39, 90, 92  
 processions, 132  
 profession, 13, 81, 82, 85

property, 73  
 prudence, 92  
 Psalms, 86, 87, 88, 130  
 punishment, 41, 43  
 pupils, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42,  
 43, 45, 46, 50, 51, 52, 75, 80,  
 100, 101, 104, 106, 107, 112,  
 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119,  
 120, 121, 123, 131, 132, 134,  
 135  
 Purification, 25, 117  
 purity, 19, 34, 74  
 purpose of the Institute, 13, 14,  
 33, 63, 64

## R

reading: in the dining room, 19,  
 32, 99, 100, 101, 103, 124, 125,  
 126; letters, 64, 94, 95, 98;  
 permission for, 76, 77; public,  
 108, 122, 124, 125, 126, 128,  
 130, 133, 139, 140; recreational,  
 111; school, study, language,  
 36, 45, 96, 98, 99, 137, 138,  
 143; spiritual, 17, 28, 32, 45, 69,  
 91, 98, 99, 102, 104, 105, 107,  
 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115,  
 120, 122, 123, 125, 127, 128,  
 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134,  
 137, 138, 139, 140, 143, 145,  
 146  
 recitation: catechism, 106, 113,  
 122, 137, 138, 143; evening  
 prayer, 117; interior prayer,  
 107, 139, 140, 143; litany, 104,  
 110, 114, 116, 117, 118, 132,  
 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 146;  
 Office, 32, 86, 87, 88, 107, 113,  
 114, 120, 122, 124, 128, 130,  
 142, 143, 145, 146; prayers in  
 school, 46; rosary, 138, 146; the  
 Scriptures, 86, 87, 88, 104, 122,  
 125, 130, 142  
 recollection, 28, 34, 68, 69, 70,  
 81, 106, 129, 130, 140, 145  
 recreation, 20, 21, 26, 29, 30, 31,  
 32, 34, 35, 68, 69, 78, 91, 101,  
 103, 105, 107, 111, 113, 115,  
 117, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124,  
 126, 131, 137, 138, 140, 143,  
 144, 145, 146  
 reddition of conduct, 55, 69  
 refectory, 20, 21, 32, 54, 66, 79,  
 99  
 reflection, 26, 47  
*Register* (of pupils), 135  
 regularity, 20, 25, 30, 31, 33, 34,  
 46, 63, 66, 68, 69, 78, 81, 93,  
 107, 118, 140, 143  
 relationships, 62  
 relatives, 29, 62, 72, 73, 78, 83,  
 90, 94, 118  
 remedies, 83, 84  
 renewal of vows, 133, 141  
 reproofs, 56  
 reserve, 45, 68, 74, 75, 81, 82, 91  
 respect, 17, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59,  
 60, 62, 67, 68, 75, 79, 95, 141  
*Respice*, 124  
 retiring at night, 74, 80, 97, 103,  
 115, 116, 117, 138, 144  
 retreat, 88, 139  
 rich, the, 39  
 rising in the morning, 74, 97,  
 116, 142  
 robe, 72, 74  
 rod, 43  
 Rodríguez, 133, 140  
 Rogation Days, 132  
 rooms, 21, 24, 47, 53, 76, 140,  
 142, 143  
 rosary, 24, 32, 44, 66, 71, 80,  
 100, 101, 104, 105, 106, 109,  
 110, 114, 117, 119, 123, 127,

rosary (*continued*), 128, 129,  
130, 136, 138, 139, 140, 143,  
145, 146  
Rule: of Saint Augustine, 68; of  
the Brothers of the Christian  
Schools, 17, 19, 22, 25, 33, 34,  
59, 69, 76, 140, 143, 145  
rules: of arithmetic, 110; of  
modesty, 31; of the Gospel, 19  
*Rules for School, The*, 99, 138

## S

sacraments, 15, 84  
salvation, 19, 33, 35, 68  
sanctification, 68  
Saturday, 25, 50, 52, 117, 118,  
120, 123, 130, 137  
scandal, 27  
school, 13, 14, 15, 19, 24, 30, 35,  
36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47,  
48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 60, 64, 66, 72,  
80, 84, 89, 93, 97, 99, 100, 101,  
102, 104, 105, 109, 111, 112, 113,  
115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 132,  
134, 135, 140, 141, 144  
Scriptures, the 17, 86, 87, 88,  
104, 122, 125, 130, 142  
seclusion, 33, 34  
seculars, 92  
self-control, 17, 35, 112  
senses, 17, 70  
sermon, 111, 117, 128, 136  
service, 58, 60, 67, 84  
serving at Mass, 14  
serving Brothers, the, 21, 23, 29,  
60, 65, 66, 67, 141  
Sext, 124, 128, 130, 143  
shoes, 72  
sick, the (*see also* illness), 83, 84  
signal, 46  
signs, 31, 35, 46, 54, 56, 58, 60,  
76, 82, 124  
silence, 20, 27, 31, 34, 35, 36, 45,  
46, 59, 60, 62, 63, 66, 68, 70,  
78, 79, 80, 82, 112, 115, 116,  
126, 140  
simplicity, 33, 55, 56, 58, 77, 83,  
85  
sin, 18, 68, 95  
singing, 14, 101  
sleep, 20, 74  
Society, the (*see also* Institute),  
13, 17, 19, 24, 29, 32, 33, 34,  
35, 71, 73, 78, 81, 86, 91, 92,  
94, 96, 141, 146  
sodality, 24  
souls, 55, 93, 113, 114  
speaking, 27, 29, 30, 31, 34, 39,  
42, 46, 47, 48, 54, 58, 60, 63,  
66, 67, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82,  
92, 96, 117  
spelling, 37  
Spirit (*see also* Holy Spirit):  
movement of the, 18; of Jesus  
Christ, 58, 100  
spirit: interior, 34; of adoration,  
129; of Christianity, 19, 35, 112,  
113; of community, 20, 133; of  
faith, 16, 32, 33, 34, 69; of Saint  
Joseph, 101; of the Institute,  
16, 17, 18, 19, 33, 63, 64, 132;  
of the world, 68  
spiritual exercises, 20, 21, 22,  
24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, 61, 66,  
67, 69, 76, 79, 82, 93, 97, 104,  
106, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113,  
115, 117, 119, 120, 127, 129,  
131, 133, 136, 142, 145, 146  
spiritual reading. *See* reading:  
spiritual.  
stability, 141  
state in life, 14, 16  
stove, 20  
strangers, 96

study, 18, 99, 100, 102, 103, 105,  
106, 110, 122, 137, 138, 143  
style, 72  
submission, 55, 56, 68  
sufferings, 32  
Sunday, 19, 23, 37, 38, 50, 104,  
107, 108, 115, 119, 120, 123,  
131, 132, 145  
supper, 25, 26, 97, 103, 108, 113,  
115, 120, 124, 126, 127, 129,  
130, 144  
supports of the Institute, 34, 68,  
69, 81  
surplice, 14  
switch, 43

### T

teachers, 14, 43, 44, 47, 48, 49,  
52, 72, 100, 101, 104, 105, 119,  
135  
teaching, 34, 36, 37, 39, 44, 50,  
70, 96, 101, 105, 106, 108, 109,  
112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 120,  
121, 123, 131, 132, 133, 135,  
136  
temptations, 55, 69  
tenderness, 38, 83  
*Tenebrae*, 123, 127, 129  
thanksgiving, 23, 104, 110, 114,  
116, 125, 130, 131, 133, 145,  
146  
Theresa, Saint, 33  
thoughts, 18, 30  
Thursday, 23, 28, 50, 51, 109,  
114, 115, 124, 125, 126, 134,  
136, 137  
Tierce, 124, 128, 130, 142  
touch, 31, 42, 75  
trades, 135  
Transfiguration, 50, 136  
travel (*see also* journey), 25, 57,  
72, 74, 80, 90, 91, 92

*Travel in the Holy Land*, 111  
Trinity. *See* Most Holy Trinity.  
trouble, 28, 31, 48, 59, 60, 126,  
127  
*Tu autem*, 124  
Tuesday, 25, 50, 120, 137

### U

union, 35, 58, 60, 68, 126

### V

vacation, 51, 88, 99, 112, 118,  
135, 137, 138, 139  
veneration, 17, 54  
*Veni Sancte*, 102  
vernacular language, 96  
verses, 118  
Vespers, 50, 88, 106, 107, 113,  
114, 119, 120, 122, 125, 129,  
143, 145, 146  
view(s), 16, 17, 56, 76, 108, 118  
vigilance, 19, 41  
Vincent Ferrer, Saint, 33  
virtue(s), 30, 34, 35, 39, 55, 67,  
71, 74, 143  
Visitation of the Most Blessed  
Virgin Mary, 51, 136  
visits, 27, 48, 49, 62, 63  
vows, 86, 87, 88, 95, 133, 141

### W

walks, walking, 21, 31, 82, 91,  
111, 142, 146  
wallet, 71  
watchfulness, 18, 42, 46, 66, 67,  
75  
weather, 102, 111  
Wednesday, 50, 52, 109, 118,  
120, 121, 123, 124, 131, 134,  
137  
will of God, 17, 69, 77



wisdom, 75, 81, 108  
witness, 63  
women, 49, 63, 75, 81, 91  
work, 21, 66, 67, 99, 110, 138,  
140, 143, 145  
working class, 14, 15  
world, 30, 33, 62, 68  
writing, 21, 36, 39, 43, 49, 64,  
65, 72, 76, 84, 90, 93, 94, 95,  
98, 99, 104, 105, 110, 117, 118,  
135, 137, 138, 143

### Y

yard, 24  
young Brothers, 43, 61

### Z

zeal, 18, 33, 70