




The Messenger

A LASALLIAN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE



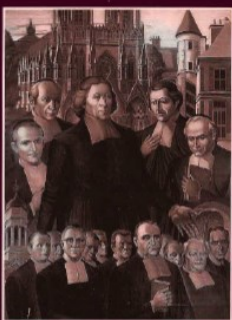
Paris: The Ecclesiastical Establishment

Dear friends, welcome to Issue Eight of "The Messenger". As always, we begin by answering our discussion questions from the previous issue - Paris: The Ecclesiastical Establishment. The secret enemy from Saint Sulpice was Father De La Chétardie, who slowly developed a deep resentment for DLS and for his refusal to allow the Church to interfere in the running of the community or schools of the Brothers. In 1702, an investigation was conducted through most of November because of a complaint received by Chétardie around two Brothers that said they were being treated to harshly. Chétardie took this opportunity to stir more trouble for DLS. The Brothers left the Grande Maison because the continued interference into the affairs of the community left DLS with no choice but to shift the Novitiate to a location outside of the Parish of Saint Sulpice and away from Chétardie. The new house was to be

located on the Rue de Charonne, close to the infamous Bastille and in the Parish of Saint Paul. The move to the new house was truly Providential, as across the street was a Chapel of the Dominican Sisters of the Cross. They became principle supporters of the Brothers over the next several years and never let the Brothers down in times of need.

THE WORK IS YOURS

The Life of
Saint John Baptist de La Salle



Luke Salvo, FSC
Second Edition

Issue 8: Paris: The Educational Establishment

Live Jesus in our hearts!

Mr. Kane Raukura

Chairperson - NZMAC

(NZ Mission Action Committee)



Q1. Who traditionally had control of education at the time of De La Salle?

Q2. What occurred on February 14th 1704 that was a devastating blow to De La Salle?

Q3. What was the final compromise with De La Chétardie?

Q4. What did DLS mean by "Domine opus tuum?"



Paris: The Educational Establishment (1703–1706)

The new center on the Rue de Charonne provided a retreat and a respite from whatever designs the pastor of Saint Sulpice may have had on the burgeoning Society of the Brothers. At the same time it left them more vulnerable to the attacks of other enemies who could only profit from their demise as a community.

In order to understand the complex legal entanglements that followed upon the move to the faubourg Saint Antoine, it is necessary to realize what a challenge the Lasallian enterprise was to the educational establishment in Paris at the time. By long-standing tradition, the schooling was in the hands of three groups: the Guild of Writing Masters, under the protection of the Lieutenant General of the police at the Châtelet; the Corporation of the Masters of the Little Schools, under the jurisdiction of the archdiocese, specifically the diocesan supervisor (*écolâtre*); and the charity schools in the parishes, under the jurisdiction of the local pastor. The policies that De La Salle introduced into the Christian Schools were in direct conflict with all three.

Admission to the Guild of Writing Masters came only after a long and difficult apprenticeship. Its members were sworn to safeguard the quality of penmanship and the authenticity of signatures. Its monopoly in these areas, which had been extended to include mathematics, was under the protection of the king. In the view of the writing masters, it was bad enough that writing and arithmetic were being taught in the Christian Schools, although that was already a matter of contention with the Little Schools as well. The real threat to their monopoly was that teachers of these restricted subjects were being trained in the Brothers' novitiate and in the Sunday Academy, both recently transferred from the Grande Maison to the faubourg Saint Antoine, as well as in the teacher training program at Saint Hippolyte.

The challenge that the Brothers represented to the schoolmasters in the Little Schools was competition of a different sort. The simultaneous method employed in the Brothers' schools was more efficient, the curriculum was more practical, and there was better discipline. In short, it was a better educational situation. The real bone of contention, however, was that the Brothers provided gratuitous instruction

for all, including those who could afford to pay. The schoolmasters complained, not without cause, that they were being put out of business in those areas where the Brothers had opened competing schools in territory officially and exclusively assigned to them.

Technically and legally, the Brothers' schools belonged to the category of charity schools under the control of the pastor. De La Salle and his Brothers did not "open" schools; they took over the direction either of charity schools already functioning or of new schools that the pastor opened for them. Yet the Christian Schools of De La Salle did not easily fit into the traditional pattern. They differed from the ordinary charity schools as much as they did from the Little Schools conducted by a single schoolmaster. And, as can be seen from the conflicts in the parish of Saint Sulpice, there were many policies concerning the teachers and the schools where the Brothers would not allow the pastor to interfere, even though they operated under his authority.

Furthermore, the Brothers formed a nascent community with a network of schools, innovative educational methods, and a distinctive garb to signify their corporate identity. Although the Society of the Brothers as yet had no legal existence in either civil or canon law, it did exist in reality. As such it was a threat to the established order: to the diocesan and parish authorities who wanted to control it and to direct its future course; to the writing masters and schoolteachers who wanted to destroy this new corporate structure intruding on the educational scene.

The Writing Masters Go to the Police

The opening of the novitiate on the Rue de Charonne, with the placard boldly proclaiming for all to see that the Brothers of the Christian Schools were in business, led the writing masters to decide that it was time to act. The new school seemed to be the most vulnerable as a target for the initial attack. If successful, it would then be easier to force the Brothers out of Paris altogether, or at least restrict them to charity schools for the certified poor.

In January 1704 the Guild of Writing Masters lodged their complaint with the Lieutenant General of the police, the Marquis d'Argenson, who was the official competent to deal with a civil case. De La Salle was accused of assuming the title of Superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools without legal authorization, of conducting without authorization or competence several schools on the pretext that

they were charity schools, and of accepting into the schools all those who applied, whether rich or poor. A list was appended giving the names of sons of artisans enrolled in the school who could afford to pay. More than likely, these were the names of pupils who had left the writing masters to transfer to the Brothers' schools. Among the parents there were two surgeons, a locksmith who owned two houses, a wine merchant, a butcher, and several innkeepers.

The complaint also accused De La Salle of training teachers and teaching subjects reserved by law to the writing masters. The sign over the door was adduced as evidence that a rival corporation was being formed illegally. The complaint demanded that the furnishings and school supplies from the building on the Rue de Charonne be confiscated and handed over to the guild.

When De La Salle failed to reply to the complaint, D'Argenson gave the order for the confiscation. Two officers of the court, accompanied by a sergeant-at-arms, appeared at the school on February 7, 1704. They took an inventory of all the school furnishings—desks and chairs, pens, inkwells, and writing samples—and put them under seal for safekeeping pending the judgment of the court. Two days later De La Salle was summoned to appear at the Châtelet to face the accusation of conducting several classes and schools throughout the city and for demonstrating the art of penmanship. He was informed that the confiscation was to be confirmed officially and the materials were to be put at the disposal of the Guild of Writing Masters.

De La Salle made no move to defend himself. He knew it would be useless. As a priest, he might have pleaded that the Châtelet, a civil court, had no jurisdiction over him. But this would not exempt his Brothers since they had no ecclesiastical status. Besides, a judgment by default could always be appealed if the opportunity presented itself. De La Salle probably realized that a condemnation might actually win sympathy and support for the Brothers, especially among the parents or the young adults who were profiting from the innovative methods and the quality education offered in the Christian Schools and the Sunday Academy.

Inevitably, on February 22, 1704, De La Salle was condemned in the Châtelet by default. The writing masters were given title to all the furnishings of the school that had been used to teach writing. De La Salle was forbidden henceforth to accept in his school any but the children of the certified poor. In addition, a fine of 50 livres was levied against him personally for violating the city ordinances by "conducting classes and schools that taught the art of writing."

It was true, of course: in modern terms, an act of civil disobedience. Not only was writing taught in the Brothers' schools, but the novitiate and the training program at Saint Hippolyte were turning out fine calligraphers independently of the guild. But there was no way that De La Salle was willing to back away from the course he had set for himself. It was time to challenge the traditional system that made it impossible for the children of the poor either to share an educational experience on an equal basis with those who were better off, or to learn those skills—writing and arithmetic as well as reading—that would enable them to break out of the social bind in which their poverty had placed them.

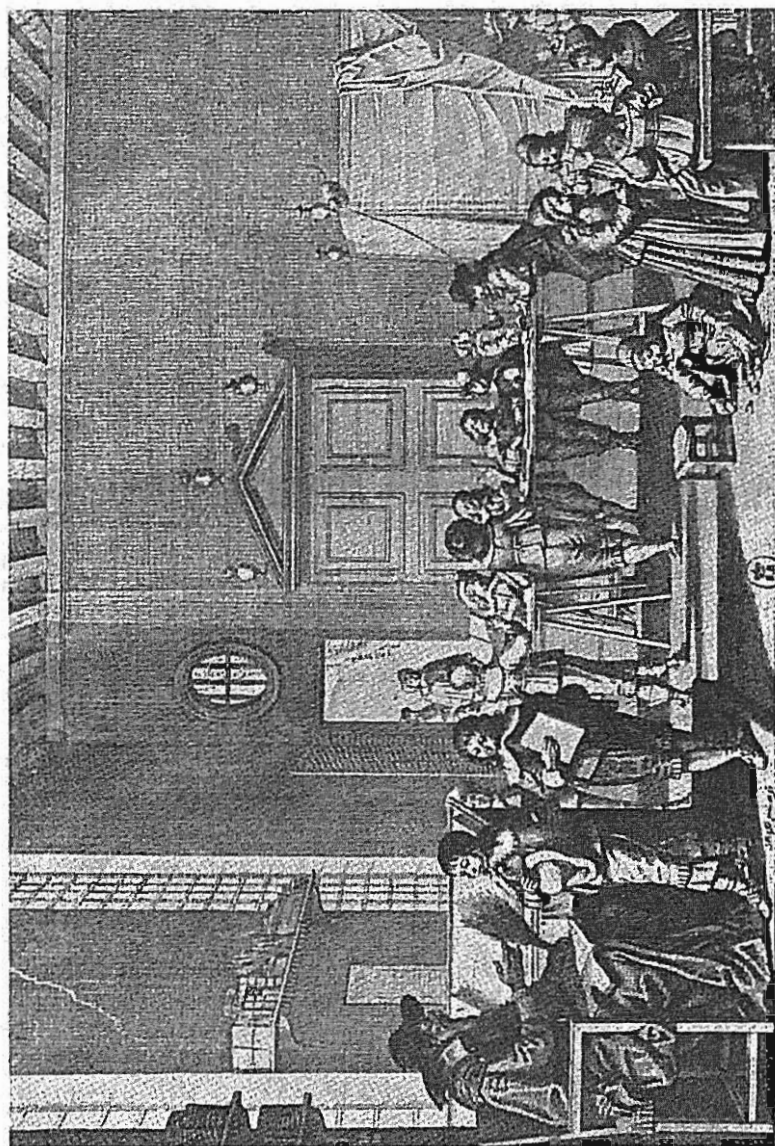
The Masters of the Little Schools Go to the Chancery

Meanwhile, sensing the rift between De La Salle and De La Chérardie, the Masters of the Little Schools decided that they could safely proceed against De La Salle without objection from the pastor of Saint Sulpice. There was a new archdiocesan supervisor responsible for the Little Schools, a priest less favorable to the Brothers than his predecessor had been, and one sensitive to the mood of the cardinal, who had become annoyed with De La Salle ever since the trouble over the Bricot appointment. In any case, from the point of view of the archdiocese, De La Salle was no longer the ecclesiastical superior of the Brothers.

On February 14, 1704, just one week after the confiscation order by the civil court, an edict was issued from the diocesan chancery forbidding De La Salle to teach, to engage or assign other teachers, or to conduct schools in Paris or any of its environs without being assigned a specific territory by the diocesan supervisor of schools. In addition he was fined 50 livres, and all the furnishings in his schools were to be confiscated. In effect, De La Salle was being condemned for intruding on the rights of the Little Schools.

De La Salle Decides to Appeal

This judgment by ecclesiastical authority was a devastating blow. With the cardinal in his present mood, De La Salle realized that an appeal in that direction would be useless. By the same token, he could not accept the interdiction which forbade him to assign teachers or conduct schools. That would, in effect, destroy the Society that he had vowed in 1691 to establish. This time, he knew that he had to act. He



A master of the Little Schools

engaged a lawyer, M. Guillaume Quellier, to represent him. Accordingly, on March 19, 1704, the feast of Saint Joseph, patron of the Institute, De La Salle lodged an appeal through his lawyer to the court of parliament against the decision of the diocesan supervisor given on February 14. It would be another year before the appeal would be heard.

Meanwhile, on May 4, De La Salle filed a petition with the Lieutenant General of the police to recover the furnishings that had been confiscated at the Rue de Charonne. The basis of the petition was that the sentence of the Châtelet of February 22 was invalid since it conceded to the writing masters school furnishings that the diocesan supervisor had already assigned on February 14 of the previous week to the schoolmasters of the Little Schools. By these legal maneuvers, De La Salle and his lawyer were putting the police at the Châtelet in opposition to the diocesan supervisor of schools, and the writing masters against the schoolmasters of the Little Schools.

In a hearing held on May 30, the judge at the Châtelet refused to accept the petition of De La Salle and sentenced him to pay the court costs. The sentence of February 22 would stand, pending any appeal. There did not have to be an appeal, since the decision left unresolved the question of the furnishings, which the Châtelet had awarded to the writing masters and the diocesan supervisor had assigned to the schoolmasters. For his part, De La Salle could only await the eventual outcome. In the meantime he had taken the precaution of putting into storage in a rented building the novitiate furnishings which had been donated by Madame Voisin.

The Writing Masters Press Their Advantage

Encouraged by their victories in court, the writing masters decided to widen the attack. On June 7, 1704, they petitioned D'Argenson at the Châtelet to issue a restraining order on De La Salle, Ponce, Nicolas, and the 16 other Brothers, mentioned by name, who were teaching in Paris without authorization of the diocesan supervisor. They demanded that the Brothers cease their corporate activities at once and that a fine be imposed of 500 livres per Brother (almost three years' salary!) and an additional fine of 2,000 livres on De La Salle.

On July 11 a restraining order was issued to that effect, except that the fines were reduced: 50 livres per Brother and 100 from De La Salle, a moot point since they had no money to pay anything. In addition, the decree stated that any parents who could afford to pay

would be liable to prosecution if they sent their children to the "Christian gratuitous schools," which were no longer to be considered open to the general public, but only to the certified poor.

Frustrated at not obtaining any money from De La Salle or the Brothers, the writing masters thereupon undertook to sell the furnishings that were still at the Rue de Charonne. They arrived at the school accompanied by wreckers and their tools. The sign over the door was torn down; benches, desks, books, and all the teaching materials used in the Sunday Academy were carted off in wagons. De La Salle and the Brothers witnessed the devastation without complaint. There was nothing they could do to stop it. In this fashion, the Sunday Academy, that had done so much good for so many young men since its foundation, came to an end.

The End of the Teacher-training Program at Saint Hippolyte

The repercussions of these events reached all the way across town to the faubourg Saint Marcel, where Brother Nicolas Vuyart and Brother Gervais were directing the teacher-training program. The decree of the Châtelet of July 11 applied to this enterprise more than to any other; Nicolas Vuyart was one of the first named after the Founder in the condemnation. The pastors of the parishes of Saint Martin and Saint Hippolyte, who stood the most to lose, consulted with the two Brothers to see what could be done to save the program. They decided to apply independently for authorization for each of the Brothers to teach, using their secular names without reference to De La Salle or the Christian Schools. The pastors would submit the petition in their own name.

The writing masters were not deceived. They easily gathered enough evidence to show that Nicolas and Gervais were in fact associated with De La Salle and guilty of conducting a school "under his orders." On August 29, 1704, the inevitable sentence fell. The Lieutenant General of the police, rejecting the petition of the two pastors, confirmed the previous decrees of February 22 and July 11 against the Brothers; in addition, under penalty of the law, the "Brothers of the Charity Schools" were forbidden to live in community or constitute themselves as a Society until such time as they received letters patent from the king. The decree left the pastors free, however, to engage anyone they wished to teach writing in their schools to the children of the poor, provided that they submitted the names of the poor students to the approval of the writing masters.

This created a dilemma for the two Brothers. In order to continue the program, they would have to put aside the habit and sever any organizational link they had with De La Salle and the Brothers. Vuyart had already inherited in his own name the funds that had been left by the previous pastor, Father Lebreton, to insure that the program would continue. In deciding to break definitively with the Brothers, Vuyart's motives may not have been as traitorous or self-serving as the biographers attribute to him. The pastor of Saint Hippolyte, after all, allowed him to teach in the parish school for the next 24 years.

Vuyart may have thought—incorrectly as it turned out—that by leaving the Brothers he could save the training program and so protect the legacy and fulfill the last wishes of Father Lebreton. But Vuyart did not get along well with Brother Gervais, who was forced to leave Saint Hippolyte since he wanted to remain faithful to the Brothers. The end result was that the program had to be closed, probably during the vacation period in September 1704.

The Writing Masters and the Schoolmasters Join Forces

During the vacation period in September 1704, the writing masters decided to suggest to their ancient rivals, the schoolmasters, that they work together in their common cause against De La Salle and the Brothers. Their aim was to gather evidence that De La Salle was ignoring the ban pronounced on August 29 by the Lieutenant General of the police. In this way they hoped to bolster their case when the appeal of De La Salle against the decision of the diocesan supervisor would come before parliament.

A meeting was held between representatives of the two groups on September 30. A statement had been prepared by the president of the Guild of Writing Masters for the schoolmasters to sign, which they eagerly did. The statement accused "Master John Baptist de La Salle, so-called superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and the self-styled [*prétendus*] Brothers of the aforesaid Schools" of continuing "since the first of the present month of September to assemble children of bourgeois parents into their various locations in the different sections of this city where they openly teach these children contrary to the instructions from the police."

The statement goes on to maintain that what the Brothers are doing is prejudicial to the plaintiffs, stripping them of their best scholars who were children from good families, and making it difficult for them to earn a living. Accordingly, the statement demands that the

sentence of the police be carried out and that action be taken against “the aforesaid De La Salle and the self-styled Brothers and the others mentioned in the judgments already referred to.”

The “judgments referred to” were those from the Châtelet of February 22, July 11, and August 29, which referred explicitly and respectively only to the teacher-training establishments in Saint Antoine and Saint Marcel, the principal targets of the writing masters. By signing the statement which made no mention of these specifics, the schoolmasters were trying to apply the decrees to the schools in the parish of Saint Sulpice, which was their concern, but outside the jurisdiction of the Châtelet.

The only one who could clarify this issue and defend the right of the Brothers to teach in his parish schools was Father De La Chétardie. But he did nothing. Meanwhile, once the four schools pertaining to Saint Sulpice reopened in October, the Brothers continued on with their daily tasks in the classroom. They were continually harassed by the writing masters, who kept threatening to produce the signed agreement if the Brothers continued to accept others than the certified poor. Hired spies would follow the children on their way to school to see if any of those listed in the petitions were still attending the Brothers' classes. The Brothers themselves were threatened with more legal action and the parents with prosecution and fines unless they could prove their inability to pay.

De La Chétardie soon found his sources of support for the schools drying up. A whispering campaign spread the word among wealthy donors that the Christian Schools in his parish were in legal difficulty and would soon be shut down. The alms that had been allotted to the parish from the royal treasury for the relief of the poor were considerably reduced, so much so that De La Chétardie had to protest to the royal treasurer. On the advice of the charity board of the parish, in the fall of 1704, De La Chétardie closed the recently opened school on the Rue des Fossés-Monsieur-le-Prince. It was hoped in this way to cut down on the number of Brothers teaching in the parish, reduce expenses, and make a token gesture to show good will to the writing masters.

Parliamentary Decisions

The schoolmasters of the Little Schools, however, would not be satisfied with half measures. In December they, too, decided to bring their case before the parliamentary court in a petition to have the sentence

of the diocesan supervisor against De La Salle (which was still under appeal) applied to Brothers Ponce, Nicolas, Jean, Joseph, and others teaching in the Christian Schools. The only way the Brothers could defend themselves legally, without risking a royal judgment from parliament against the entire community, was to respond as distinct individuals. In a response dated January 7, 1705, each of them insisted that his school was dependent on the pastor of Saint Sulpice and therefore not implicated in the condemnation of De La Salle. From a legal point of view, the cases were distinct.

The ploy might have worked if De La Salle's appeal to the Châtelet against the judgment of the diocesan supervisor, lodged a year earlier, had not come up for judgment at the same time. The court decided to deal with the cases together. On March 26, 1705, the schoolmasters petitioned the court to challenge the Brothers named in the suit to furnish proof that they had no connection with De La Salle or his Christian Schools. It was one thing to hide behind a legal fiction, but to turn it into a reality was quite another matter. To do so, the Brothers would have had to make a formal renouncement of their association and put aside their distinctive religious habit. This they could not bring themselves to do, and so their case was doomed.

Realizing that the situation in Paris was hopeless, De La Salle was already involved in negotiations to establish the Brothers in Normandy. By July 1705 he had opened a school in Darnétal. Soon thereafter he signed a lease for the property at Saint Yon just outside Rouen. Quickly and quietly he had the novitiate furnishings that had been donated by Madame Voisin for the Grande Maison taken out of storage and transported to Saint Yon. The Archbishop of Rouen and the president of the Rouen parliament paid the expenses.

The appeal before the Paris parliament moved slowly during the winter of 1705–1706. The schoolmasters did not cease to lobby with prominent persons in a position to influence the outcome. D'Argenson at the Châtelet, for example, was won over to the idea that all teachers in the schools should be subject to one diocesan authority. On a higher level, the Procurator General of the King, Henri D'Aguesseau, held long conversations with Cardinal Noailles about the legal status of the Brothers. The king himself let his judgment be known through his secretary, the Count of Pontchartrain: no such community should be allowed to operate until it had received letters patent.

The final decision was handed down by the court of the parliament on February 5, 1706. Sentence was pronounced against "John

Baptist de La Salle, so-called superior of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, as also against those named Jean, Ponce, Joseph, and the others, who were conducting schools under the auspices of the aforesaid De La Salle without authorization or competence." De La Salle was forbidden "to establish any community under the name of a training school for teachers in the primary schools, or anything similar, or to post on the door any special inscription similar to the one that had been confiscated."

On March 19, 1706, the feast of Saint Joseph, the decree of parliament was communicated to De La Salle at the Rue Saint Honoré, where he had been staying, and separately to the other Brothers at the Rue du Bac. The Brothers who had been teaching in the three schools in the parish of Saint Sulpice throughout the long months of opposition and uncertainty were thoroughly disheartened at the final outcome. They asked De La Salle for permission to close the schools, and after some hesitation he agreed.

One day in July of that year, without giving any advance warning, the Brothers simply took off from Paris for parts unknown, leaving only one Brother at the Rue Princesse to watch over the house. The next day the children were surprised to find the doors of the schools locked against them. When the Brothers failed to return after a few days, the parents became alarmed and went to the pastor to seek an explanation. He had to admit that he was as surprised as they and equally at a loss as to what to do.

De La Chétardie and the Final Compromise

Some months before the final decision of parliament and the subsequent withdrawal of the Brothers, the pastor of Saint Sulpice had already decided that he had to do something to save the schools in his parish. He was aroused to action for the first time in the fall of 1705 when the writing masters appeared at the Rue Princesse in an attempt to have the furnishings confiscated. They were stymied by the owner of the building who had registered a prior claim to seize the furnishings as security for the payment of the rent. This did not keep the writing masters from continually harassing the Brothers, disrupting the classes, demanding proof that such and such a student was truly a charity case, and threatening further police and legal action.

As soon as De La Salle and the novices had left for Rouen, De La Chétardie decided to take legal action to assert his rights. The judgment of the Châtelet was a civil act and had no application to him as

a pastor or to his parish schools. Although De La Chétardie had no great attachment to De La Salle personally, and probably thought of himself as better qualified to direct the Brothers, he did regard the Brothers themselves very highly. He approved thoroughly of their educational policies and methods as well as the importance they gave to association and community life.

Accordingly, on November 19, 1705, he lodged a petition with the Lieutenant General of the police in favor of Brothers Ponce, Jean, Joseph, and the others, carefully avoiding any mention of De La Salle, from whom he dissociated himself. In the petition, De La Chétardie insisted that the school furnishings on the Rue Princesse belonged to him by right and that the seizure should be lifted, that the Brothers were in his employ, that all disturbances against them should cease, and that they be given the respect due to them according to the rights of the charity schools. No immediate action was taken at the time, since the appeal was still pending before parliament.

Once the final decree had been issued, De La Chétardie was summoned to meet with representatives from the writing masters for a hearing before the lieutenant of the police. The writing masters objected that the pastor could in no way prove that the Brothers were teaching in charity schools, since so many of the pupils could afford to pay. They added that the pastor was free to engage anyone he wished to teach writing to the really poor of the parish, provided that the names be certified by the police and communicated to the guild for their approval.

While the legal status of his parish schools was very much up in the air, and especially after the Brothers withdrew, the suggestion was made to De La Chétardie that the Brothers be replaced. The pastor refused even to consider it. Every bit as much as the parents, he genuinely appreciated the Brothers and wanted to keep them for his schools.

With that in mind, De La Chétardie contacted De La Salle and begged him to allow the Brothers to return to Paris. The Founder replied that he would rather yield to his enemies than to have the Brothers exposed to continual disturbances with no appreciation for what they were trying to do. He went on to say that the way the Brothers had been treated over the last few years had discouraged many of them and that he could not easily replace them. He was adamant on this point. He said that he would not send any Brothers back to Saint Sulpice unless he could be assured that they would be allowed to work undisturbed. He insisted that De La Chétardie as-

some personal responsibility for protecting them. The pastor readily agreed, and the Brothers returned in time to open the schools in the fall of 1706. De La Chétardie even offered to pay for their transportation back to Paris, so happy was he to see them return.

It remained only to come to terms with the Guild of the Writing Masters. The pastor met with some of their leaders and had a document drawn up before two notaries. In it De La Chétardie stated that it was he who commissioned the Brothers to teach in the charity schools of the parish; that De La Salle had used his disciples in this work only on the orders of the pastor; that he, the pastor, had provided lodging, paid the salaries and the rent; that he wanted the Brothers to continue their work in full liberty without further interference.

For their part, the writing masters insisted that the Brothers accept in their schools only those whose poverty could be attested to by one of the priests of the parish. Parents soon came flocking from all over the parish to obtain the required certificates attesting to their poverty. It seems that few of them were refused by the priest in charge. This face-saving device changed very little: by and large the same students as before were enrolled in the parish schools conducted by the Brothers.

De La Salle in the Face of Crisis

Throughout all of these difficulties De La Salle retained his characteristic calm, remained in the background as much as possible, and went about his business as usual. With his equally characteristic tenacity, he never surrendered any of the principles that he considered essential to the Brothers and the Christian Schools: that they should conduct schools together and by association as a Society, with or without legal status; that in order to educate the poor the schools be gratuitous for all without discrimination; that the teachers be trained religiously and professionally, within the Society, for their educational mission. On all three counts, as can be seen from the intensity of the legal debates, De La Salle had set himself in direct conflict with the educational theory and practice of the time.

The secret of De La Salle's imperturbable confidence and calm in the face of opposition and defeat lay in his deep religious faith, the "spirit of faith," as he called it, that he left as a legacy to his Institute. The biographer Blain, probably citing a written memoir he had in hand, quotes the Founder in these words:

In the words of Gamaliel, "If this undertaking is from God, who can destroy it?" If my work does not come from God, I would consent to its ruin. I would join our enemies in destroying it if I thought that it did not have God for its author, or that he did not will its progress. But if he declares himself its defender, let us fear nothing. . . . If contradiction is a proof that an enterprise comes from God, let us be happy; our Institute is indeed his creation. The cross which follows it everywhere gives us assurance that this is so.

This same sentiment found an echo in one of a series of retreat resolutions that he made for himself:

I shall always consider the establishment and the direction of our community as the work of God. That is why I have entrusted it to his care, in such a way that as far as I am concerned, I shall do nothing that concerns the Institute except by his orders. For that reason I shall always consult extensively concerning what I ought to do. I will often speak to God in the words of the prophet Habacuc: *Domine opus tuum*. [Lord, the work is yours.]

This attitude of resignation to the divine will and radical trust in divine Providence did not prevent De La Salle from using every available human resource and strategy to assure the continuation of the work he had begun. The events in Paris only served to strengthen his conviction that his Institute could never survive so long as it was dependent on an individual pastor or bishop. That was why he moved the novitiate from Reims to Paris in the first place. That was also one motive for opening the school in Avignon and a factor in the decision to send two Brothers to Rome. Now he was establishing a new center in Rouen for the same reason.

During all the difficult years in Paris, despite the opposition, the uncertainty, the reversals, and the compromises, there was notable vitality and progress elsewhere in France. During this period there were more than 50 Brothers teaching in the Christian Schools in Reims, Rethel, Guise, Laon, Chartres, Calais, Troyes, and Avignon. The reputation of the Brothers and their schools was spreading rapidly throughout France, with requests for new foundations coming all the time. There were signs that the cross might yet lead to a glorious resurrection.