

# 91. RELIGIOUS

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## 1. DEFINITION OF "RELIGIOUS" AND RELATED TERMS

**Furetière**<sup>1</sup> (1690) gives the word "religious" the same meaning as the mass media gives it when speaking of religious Jews or Moslems. A person is said to be religious when he is pious. By this we can understand a person who maintains a habitual relationship with God, and not only one who has accepted stricter commitments than his religion requires of all its followers. It is only by giving the term a very restricted meaning that we can use it to define the religious as a member of a community, subject to a rule of exemplary life, and often protected by the walls of some monastery or retreat.

**Richelet**<sup>2</sup> (1710) says more or less the same thing, but adds that, persons referred to by the restrictive meaning of the term, are characterised by the wearing of a distinctive habit and the three vows of religion, that is, poverty, obedience and chastity.

Bluche's **Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle**<sup>3</sup> (1990) does not use the word "community" in the sense of religious house, but emphasises the importance of craft

guilds in the development of piety, in other words, of religious life in the broadest sense of the word.

Apparently, De La Salle could have organised his schoolteachers into craft guilds without habits and without vows, but he did not do so. He preferred a certain withdrawal from the world and a form of community life which led the Brothers of the Christian Schools to adopt a status close to that of the religious life, which was given papal approval.

Gérard Michaux, the author of the section devoted to "religious orders", differentiates between the various kinds of "newly-founded apostolic institutes for men" (preaching, home and foreign missions, teaching, charitable work):

- solemn vows (Theatines, Barnabites, Jesuits);
- simple vows (Doctrinaires, Lazarists, to which we can add the FSC's);
- common life without vows (Oratorians, Sulpicians, Eudists, Foreign Missions).

Furetière defines **Religion** as “the worship one gives God; feeling, belief in the divinity”. But the word sometimes means “piety, justice, exactness”. It is used also to mean “fidelity, regularity and exactness in keeping one’s word. [...] Religion is used to mean also a stricter profession of Christianity, under a rule which varies from founder to founder. This young man has entered religion”.

“Rule is used, when speaking of morals, of just

and reasonable conduct. Regularity, law, model, example. Religion serves as a rule to help us live well. [...] Rule is used particularly to refer to certain constitutions on which religious houses are founded, and which one vows to observe on entering them”.

“*Regular*, adjective, Punctual, exact. A person who lives regularly. Regular is used more especially of those who make vows in a religious house. It is the opposite of secular ecclesiastic”.

## 2. THE TERM “RELIGIOUS” IN CANONICAL DOCUMENTS

### 2.1. The Council of Trent

#### and decisions of the Church in France

The reform of the “regulars”, that is, of religious,<sup>4</sup> so called in order to distinguish them from “seculars” (Littré<sup>5</sup>), was the task of the 25th session of the Council of Trent.<sup>6</sup> It stipulated that “in all religions [religious institutes], whether of men or of women, profession will not be made before the age of 16 years completed” and only after “one year’s novitiate” (ch. XV). Whoever forces someone to enter religious life is excommunicated. The same sanction applies to those who oppose a religious vocation by force (ch. XVIII). In fact, these norms apply only to religions with solemn vows or, in other words, to religious orders properly so-called. The future of institutes with simple vows and religious communities without vows is not defined.

When the decisions of the special Councils of Tours and Bourges (1583-1584), the royal declarations dated July 10th 1566, and those of the parlement of Grenoble<sup>7</sup> (1661), decreed that registers of professions be officially kept and even registered with the ecclesiastical court, the reason lay in the civil consequences of solemn vows. Louis XIV, following in this the example of the Council of Trent, forbade the foundation of new orders, or at least, reserved approval for such orders to himself.

By establishing a “register of vows” as early as 1694, the Brothers of the Christian Schools showed their wish to give their new “society” a structure (CL 3,6f). After the granting of the Bull of Approbation in 1725, their wish was fulfilled. Now they made simple vows, dispensation from which was reserved to the Sovereign Pontiff. Blain, doubtlessly reflecting the opinion of the Brothers themselves, considered their vows to be vows of religion (CL 7,353; 8,193).

Consulted several times during the course of the 18th century, the Sorbonne “had no hesitation in declaring that the Bull did not put the Institute into the category of religious orders” (Circ. 406,63), since the Roman Congregation which had given its approval was that “of the Council” (concerned with pastoral matters), and not that “of Bishops and Regulars”. It was only with the publication of the Code of Canon Law in 1917 that the concept itself of the canonical religious state was modified, to include in its ranks, religious congregations with simple and public vows.

### 2.2. The 1983 Code of Canon Law<sup>8</sup>

“Associations of the faithful”, private or public, can be formed according to certain norms (can. 268-329). “Societies of apostolic life” (can. 731-746) are distinct from “institutes of consecrated life” (can. 573-730). These latter include “secular institutes” (can. 710-730) and “religious institutes” (can. 607-709). “A religious institute is a society in which, in accordance with their own law, the members pronounce public vows and live a fraternal life in common. The vows are either perpetual or temporary; if the latter, they are to be renewed when the time elapses. The public witness which religious are to give to Christ and the Church involves that separation from the world which is proper to the character and purpose of each institute” (can. 607,2 & 3).

“In itself, the state of consecrated life is neither clerical nor lay. [...] A lay institute is one which is recognised as such by ecclesiastical authority because, by its nature, character and purpose, its proper role, defined by its founder or by lawful tradition, does not include the exercise of sacred orders” (can. 588,1-3).

We learn from the biographers and from research (Maurice Auguste, Aroz, Poutet, etc.) that the Founder

was in touch with numerous religious and was well informed about other rules in existence. In his own

writings, however, De La Salle does not go into much detail at all.

### 3. MEANING OF "RELIGIOUS" IN DE LA SALLE'S WRITINGS

#### 3.1. In his catechisms

"Religion" usually means the "Christian religion" (Catholic), the only one "worthy of this name" (CL 20,II = DA 0,0,2). When De La Salle mentions (men and women) religious (CL 20,305 = DA 307,4,7; cf. CL 17,131 = I 2,5,10), he refers to a group of persons easily identifiable by his readers (for example, "making fun of priests, religious or those who practise devotion" (CL 17,220 = I 4,1,2).

Speaking of impediments to marriage, he refers to "religious" and the "vows of religion" (CL 20,379; 390; 392; 395 = DA 310,3,10; 310,3,17; 310,4,5). None of this is mentioned in DB, the catechism intended for the pupils. There is a mention of vows of religion in DC (CL 22,114 = DC 30,13,2) and, in connection with the Jubilee and with reference to the Bull of Alexander VI, of "solitary religious" and "cloistered women religious" (CL 22,119 = DC 30,13,13). It was not within the scope of these catechisms to speak of what we call the "religious life", nor even to explain the evangelical counsels.

#### 3.2. In his writings for the Brothers

This topic is not treated any more extensively in the Founder's writings for his Brothers. The MR often speak of the "religion" with which teachers should inspire their pupils and which they should teach them, but the adjective religious is not used.

Outside of the **meditations on obedience** (MD 7 to 15) and of the treatise in the *Collection* on the same subject (CL 15,40f = R 9), it is above all in the **meditations for the feasts of saints who were religious** that the salient characteristics of religious life are mentioned. And even this is not always the case (MF 173 on St Francis; MF 177 on St Teresa). In MF 130 for the feast of St Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, he speaks of the "order of the Carmelites", and, in several other meditations, he refers to the "order of St Francis" (MF 128, 135, 179, 190), the "order of St Dominic" (MF 117), an "order of Clerks Regular" (MF 153) and an "order of Canons Regular" (MF 135). In none of these meditations is the term "religious" defined. We can

try, however, to deduce what is meant by it by examining the way it is used.

#### 3.2.1. RELIGIOUS AS STRICT CHRISTIANS

Christian and religious constitute a pair of words which appears under two forms. In the first instance, it is used, for example, in connection with "the Christian and religious simplicity" with which Brothers should speak to one another (RC 29,4) and give an account of their conscience (CL 15,30 = R 8,1,9); or with reference to obedience which, without faith, would not be "a Christian and religious virtue" (CL 15,158 = R 15,2,4), for the first condition of obedience is "that it should be Christian and religious" (CL 15,41 = R 9,1,2), that is, that one should obey "through virtue and a spirit of religion" (CL 15,42f = R 9,2,1).

In the second instance, these terms are used to indicate that the requirements of the religious state are stricter than those of a Christian. "The conversation of Christians, and even more so of religious, according to St Paul, ought to be heavenly" (CL 15,112 = R 13,9,3). "A Christian, and even more so a religious, profanes his heart and his mouth when he uses superfluous words" (CL 115,112 = R 13,10,3). To wish to live without true mortification "is not to live as a Christian, and still less as a religious" (MF 190,2).

#### 3.3.2. RELIGIOUS AS NON-SECULARS

Pope St Leo forbade "religious to involve themselves in secular matters". The founder told his Brothers: "This ruling applies to you more than to anyone" (MF 114,3). Does this statement imply that the Brothers are religious? This certainly seems to be the case in De La Salle's letter to Brother Mathias: "What a wonderfully handsome young man you are! How can you talk about yourself like that! Is this the way a religious should speak?" (LA 47,8). The Founder occasionally uses the term religious in the general sense of "persons consecrated to God" (MF 92,2) with reference to the Brothers.

He urges them to imitate the obedience and simplicity of the saints who belonged to "religious or-

ders" (MF 113, 128, 142, 150, etc). Quoting St Bernard ("The man in holy religion..."), he reminds them of the "nine fruits of religious life" (CL 15,1 = R 1). He speaks of the person who "enters religion" (CL 20,379 = DA 310,1,4; MF 128,2), who "becomes a religious" (MF 115, 117, 128, 130, 142, 176). But he never applies these terms directly to the Brothers. And when he draws up a list of topics for conversation, he makes a distinction between "virtues which are proper to religious" and "virtues proper and special to the Brothers of the Society" (CL 25,33). While they are clearly related, they are not identical (cf. CL 11,28 note 4).

### 3.2.3. RELIGIOUS AS PERSONS LIVING IN COMMUNITY

However, non-secular and religious are not synonymous terms, for "obedience should be the distinctive characteristic of persons living in community, distinguishing them from people in the world who enjoy their full liberty" (MD 7,3). So there is another category that has to be taken into account, that of "persons living in community" (MD 7,3), who are distinct from "seculars". The *Collection* and the *Common Rules* set persons living in community alongside religious, "obedience being the principal virtue and the most necessary for religious and for all persons who live in community" (CL 15,40 = R 9,1,1). The Brothers will not speak "of the lack of regularity in a particular religious order or in some other community" (RC 6,8).

MD 7 is the only meditation to speak of a "religious society". An expression used by St Lawrence

Justinian — "entering a religious society" — is put on a parallel with St Vincent Ferrier's reference to being "in religion" (MD 7,3).

**Religious communities** are mentioned in the *Memoir on the Habit* (CL 11,351 = MH 0,0,27) and in two meditations (MD 11 & MF 92). The meditation for December 31st speaks of order in a religious community: "Obedience is the first virtue in a community, and what distinguishes a religious house from a secular one" (MF 92,1). In the same context, "religious persons" are the equivalent of "religious" (MD 11,2) or "persons consecrated to God" (MF 92,2). Sometimes they are contrasted with "seculars" (*id.*), and sometimes with "their superiors" (12 times in MD 21).

There are, therefore, on the one hand, seculars and secular houses in which everyone enjoys freedom; and, on the other, persons consecrated to God, who live in community, have rules to observe and are bound by obedience. Men and women religious are clearly included among these, but not solitary religious who do not live in community. Religious orders or companies (MF 148, 176) form a group of houses, monasteries (MF 111, 115, 128, 131, 189) or convents (MF 117, 179, 190). The word "monk" does not occur in De La Salle's writings.

The Brothers form a special group among those who live in community. They have many characteristics which make them resemble religious: history will increase this resemblance.

## 4. CHANGES IN THE COURSE OF THE HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE

Initially, the religious spirit of the Brothers was defined in the *Rules* and in the *Collection*, both of which had been written by the Founder himself. For a long time, these two texts were the only ones in practice that were studied in novitiates. When the treatise on mental prayer in the *Collection* was found inadequate, the *Explanation of the Method of Mental Prayer* was added.

### 4.1. The Bull of Approbation in 1725

The Holy See approved the obligation contracted by the first Brothers to live in "association" and in "community", for an apostolic and educational purpose, subject to obedience and stability. The Bull transformed into vows of poverty, chastity and obedience,

the morally binding commitments which, from the very beginning, had been an inseparable part of the Brothers' lives in the Institute.

The Bull reads as follows: "The Brothers must make it their care above all to instruct children, especially the poor, in all that concerns the manner of living honest and Christian lives. [...] Let no Brother be ambitious of the priesthood or aspire to ecclesiastical orders. [...] Let their vows be those of chastity, poverty, obedience, stability in the said Institute and teaching the poor gratuitously, dispensation from these vows" being reserved to the "Roman Pontiff. [...] Let all the daily exercises, both in the house and in the school, be performed in common". Let children be instructed not only in reading, etc., but, "above all, in



the precepts of Christianity and of the Gospel. And let them learn to recite prayers, to attend public services, and to practise all the other things necessary for salvation". Other articles set out the hierarchical organisation of the Institute, and that of General Chapters.

#### 4.2. From the French Revolution to the 1917 Code of Canon Law

On February 13th 1790, solemn vows were forbidden in France and monastic orders were suppressed. "Secular congregations", however, that performed some social service were exempt. On August 18th 1792, a new law suppressed all confraternities and "lay congregations", including "that of the Brothers of the Christian School" (*sic*).

Eleven years later, on December 3rd 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte approved the re-establishment of the "Frères de la Doctrine chrétienne" (*sic*), who are "simply associated for the gratuitous instruction of young people". This decision includes "nothing that goes against the principles adopted [...] regarding religious corporations" (December 12th 1804). The result was to minimise for a considerable time the role of the vows in the Institute: "Only those who request to do so will be admitted to vows, and no one should fear the disapproval of others if he does not request to pronounce them, provided that his behaviour is good. [...] The renovation of vows will always be the result of a totally free decision on the part of the Brothers, who will not be either forced nor urged to make them" (*Rule of Government*, 1845, 4,2 & 4,20).

In 1860, the Brothers numbered almost 8,000. About a third of these had perpetual vows, another third temporary vows, and the rest no vows at all. From 1880 onwards, the latter, known as "employed novices" were urged to pronounce vows, in particular by the Br Assistant Louis de Poissy, who applied a certain amount of pressure. As the Institute was excluded at the time from State education in France, it sought to bring itself more into line with what the Church required of religious.

In 1900, by his Bull *Conditæ a Christo*, Pope Leo XIII conferred religious status on institutes with simple vows approved by the Roman magisterium. After the promulgation of the Code of Canon Law in 1917, employed novices and temporary professed Brothers had to prepare themselves for perpetual profession,

which was now obligatory for everyone after a few years of probation.

#### 4.3. The Renewal Chapter (1966-1967) and the Rules "ad experimentum"

Vatican II was less interested in the religious *state* than in religious *life* and consecrated *life*. The religious character of an institute is defined not on the basis of a certain concept of a state, but on that of the specific intentions of its founder. By asking all congregations to rewrite their rule, the Council invited them to re-express his intentions in the context of the modern world. For the Brothers of the Christian Schools, the 1966-1967 General Chapter was the "renewal chapter" called for this purpose.

The 1967 *Rules and Constitutions* begin by recalling how the Institute was founded, and then go on to define it as follows: "The institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools is a congregation of pontifical right, composed exclusively of lay religious, consecrated to God to fulfil the apostolic ministry of education" (1c). The *Declaration* (48,2) "notes with satisfaction the strong attachment of the Brothers to the profession of teaching. This function assures them a particular role among the laity in the Church. It adds a new dimension to their religious life, since for them, the exercise of the teaching profession is an integral part of their religious consecration".

The implementation of the Chapter decisions was not without its problems. In 1971, the Brother Visitors who gathered in Rome for the inter-capitular meeting, spoke of the difficulty some young Brothers had when it came to making perpetual profession. They expressed "the wish that a study be undertaken of religious commitment today, expressed by vows or by other forms, in the context of the world situation and the charism of the Institute".

The *International Commission on the Vows* (ICV) which was set up to undertake the proposed study, noted that there was "widespread confusion in the Institute on the relationship of consecration and vows, [...] and the inconsistency between perpetual vows and the ease with which individuals are dispensed from them" (Circ. 406,10).

At the same time, there was an unfounded but persistent rumour that certain Superiors wished to transform the FSC congregation into a secular institute.<sup>9</sup> And so, when the 1976 General Chapter began its

work, there was a climate of suspicion. The report submitted by the Chapter commission on "Consecration and Vows", which had tried to bear in mind the observations of the ICV, was rejected by the assembly. The Chapter asked the General Council to continue studying the question (Circ. 406,8, prop. 35). In addition, the Chapter wished the Holy See to give the Brothers a special permission to remain in the Institute without perpetual vows. The General Council responded by publishing Circular 406 on December 25th 1977. Not many changes could be made, however, because the *Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes* in Rome refused its permission.

We should note that, in the meantime, with the publication of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, religious status was granted to institutes whose members continued renewing their temporary vows without ever making perpetual vows (see 2.2. above, can. 607,2).

#### 4.4. The 1986 Chapter and the present Rule

The mission of the 1986 General Chapter, which met in a more serene atmosphere, was to bring to a close the *ad experimentum* period which had begun immediately after the Vatican II Council. The Rule it drew up retains, in article 2, the definition given in article 1c of the 1967 Rule (see above) and, in article 10, invites each Brother "to take upon himself the responsibility for integrating within his own person these constitutive elements of his vocation: consecration to God as a lay religious, apostolic ministry of education, especially of the poor, and community life". It adds in article 24: "Religious consecration establishes an intimate communion between the person of each Brother and that of Jesus Christ. This consecration is

expressed by vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, association for the service of the poor through education, and stability in the Institute".

#### 4.5. Religious within the Lasallian Family

There is a widespread desire in the Church today, among lay people and priests, to benefit from the charisma of founders of religious congregations. They wish to share in their mission and spirituality, while remaining in their present state of life. It was in this context that the "Lasallian Family" came into existence. This expression designates "all those who participate in the Lasallian educational enterprise, especially those who are moving towards a sharing of the spirit and the mission of St John Baptist de La Salle" (Circ. 435, prop. 3).

The 1993 General Chapter, in its deliberations on "the shared mission" involving the Brothers and lay people, asks that their specific vocations be respected, and states that "the Brothers' vow of association for the educational service of the poor is an indispensable sign for everyone of fidelity to a mission received from God" (Circ. 435, 3.62). It was this that, in his own day, led De La Salle to link his fate with that of the Brothers. Today, the specific vocation of the Brothers in the Lasallian Family is to manifest, by their religious consecration, this enduring characteristic of De La Salle's life.

In other words, the Brothers are called to manifest in their lives "the radicality of the Gospel and the transcendent dimension of the Kingdom" (Circ. 435, 3.61), while, at the same time, sharing their apostolic charisma with the other members of the Lasallian Family.

### 5. "FOR THEM, THE EXERCISE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THEIR RELIGIOUS CONSECRATION" (DECL. 48,2)

Speaking of institutes devoted to the apostolic life, Vatican II states: "While every exercise of the apostolate should take its origin and power from charity, some works by their very nature can become especially vivid expressions of this charity" (*Perfectæ Caritatis*, 8). In the Brothers' Institute, this takes a more "professional form", because, for them, "the exercise of the teaching profession is an integral part of their religious consecration".<sup>10</sup> Throughout the history

of the Institute, the professional aspect and the religious dimension of the life of the Brother have constituted, not a conflict of interests, but a source of great vitality.

#### 5.1. A regrettable dichotomy

In 1990, the Superior Generals of lay religious institutes declared that there were "three kinds of temptation" their form of religious life had "to face: a ten-

dency to sacralise the lay religious, [...] a tendency to become secularised [...] a tendency towards professionalism".<sup>11</sup>

A few months earlier, Br John Johnston, Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, had written the following about De La Salle's intentions in founding the Institute: "There was certainly never any intention on his part to found a religious community to which would be assigned some useful apostolic activity. His model or theoretical understanding of the Brothers' vocation never admitted a dichotomy between religious consecration and ministry. The model introduced some years later and based on a distinction between principal and secondary end, or generic end and specific end, was foreign to his manner of thinking. Never did he tell the Brothers that they were religious primarily and ministers, ambassadors, Good shepherds, or "representatives of Christ" secondarily. [...] For De La Salle, the Brothers glorified God by living together and by association their total consecration to the Holy Trinity as ministers of Christian education".

Unfortunately, he continues, we have sometimes lost sight of the Founder's model. "There developed among us a clear dichotomy between the 'religious' and 'apostolic' dimensions of our life. [...] Too often the tendency was to identify the 'primary end' with 'religious life' understood essentially in terms of prayer, silence, regular observance, fidelity to the vows; and to identify the 'secondary end' with apostolic activities".<sup>12</sup>

The *Preface* (CL 25,12-15) to the first edition of the *Rules and Constitutions* (1726) opens the door to this dichotomy. The bulwark of a Rule "is an advantage enjoyed by all religious in general, and in particular by the Brothers of the Christian Schools" (§ 2). The "particular end" of the Institute concerns "the salvation of children" (§ 6). The vow of poverty is linked with an article of the Rule: "The Brothers will accept nothing from pupils or their parents" (§ 21). We can see that a certain shift in emphasis had occurred with regard with Lasallian thought. In the 19th, and at the beginning of the 20th century, this led to a certain "reductive interpretation"<sup>13</sup> of the foundation of the institute.

## 5.2. The insight of the 1966-1967 Chapter

The 1966 General Chapter tried to recapture the true intentions of the Founder. It insisted on the reli-

gious value of the Brothers' educational apostolate: "In the one act, St John Baptist de La Salle established the Brothers as apostles and religious. While seeing to it that the schoolmasters were aware of the apostolic dimension of their work, he led them to offer themselves wholly to the Lord who employed them in his service. The spirit of the Institute is one, although it is expressed in two dimensions: faith makes the Brothers attentive to the design of God for the world; it blossoms into zeal which sustains and increasingly renews this commitment to the service of the members of Christ" (*Declaration*, 22,1).

The point is not whether or not the Brother is a religious, but what kind of religious he is.

## 5.3. Its development in the 1986 Chapter

Drawn up during the 1986 General Chapter and promulgated in 1987, the *Rule* is the result of reflection on the life and ministry of the Brothers over a period lasting a quarter of a century. The Rule begins by defining the nature of the Institute in juridical terms: "of pontifical right, composed exclusively of lay religious men" (art. 2). It then goes on to show how profession and consecration are intimately linked in the vocation of the Brother.

In conclusion, let us recall five important statements made by this document regarding the Brothers' vocation:

- Inspired by the apostolic spirituality of their Founder, "the Brothers have contributed to the promotion of the Christian laity, especially among those educators who want their professional work to be a form of Gospel ministry" (art. 17).
- "The Brothers live their faith as a gift to be used for their ministry of Christian education" (art. 20). "The spirit of faith kindles in the Brothers an ardent zeal for those confided to their care in order to open their hearts to receive the salvation revealed in Jesus Christ" (art. 7).
- "The Brothers, in fidelity to the call of the Spirit and the charism of their Founder, consecrate themselves to God in order to exercise, by association, their apostolic ministry of education" (art. 2).
- "Commitment to the apostolate is an integral part of the consecration of the Brother to God" (art. 7). "As a lay religious" (art. 10), called "to give a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor" (art. 3).
- "As religious vowed to the ministry of Christian education, the first apostolate of the Brothers consists in the witness of their consecrated life" (art. 24).

<sup>1</sup> Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel contenant généralement tous les mots français*, the Hague, 1690, art. *Religieux*.

<sup>2</sup> Richelet, *Nouveau dictionnaire français*, Geneva, 1710.

<sup>3</sup> Paris, Fayard.

<sup>4</sup> For a better understanding of the terminology of the time, one can consult the *Mémoires du clergé*. Its abridged version devotes 13 articles to women religious, without previously defining the term. It includes also 28 articles on matters related to men religious, and a special section on "mendicant religious". The term "religious" is partially defined in paragraph II which deals with the "Establishment of orders, congregations and religious houses". As if the word "religious" were completely identifiable with "community", the reader is referred to the section on this term. Likewise, in the paragraph entitled "Religious profession or solemn vows of religion", readers are referred simply to the article on "Vows". Without defining the terms "religious" or "religious house", the work states that "no establishment belonging to orders, congregations or regular houses, can be set up without the consent of the bishop" (vol. XIV, col. 409). This could mean that De La Salle obtained the consent of the bishop before opening the novitiate at Vaugirard because he intended to set up some form of regular, that is, religious life (cf. CL 7,256; 315; 318). This was not, of course, an approbation of this "new community" or religious congregation, as the term meant in those days (CL 11,55-56). Neither a novitiate nor a habit

are enough to indicate the existence of a new kind of religious. "The approval of the town and its inhabitants is required also" (vol. XIV, col. 411). Without it, the establishment cannot be considered complete (cf. the 1691 vow with Vuyart and Drolin). Necessary also are letters patent from the King and official recognition from the bishop or the Pope. Cf. *Abrégé du recueil des actes [...] du clergé de France*, vol. XIV, 2nd edition, Paris & Avignon, 1771.

<sup>5</sup> *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, Paris, 1878.

<sup>6</sup> CHANUT, Abbé, *Le saint concile de Trente*, Paris, 1683.

<sup>7</sup> *Abrégé des Mémoires du clergé*.

<sup>8</sup> *Code of Canon Law*.

<sup>9</sup> SALM, L., *A Religious Institute in transition, The story of three General Chapters*, Romeville, Illinois, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> It does not say that it consists only of this: the personal life of the Brother is also an "integral part" of his consecration.

<sup>11</sup> *Brother in lay Religious Institutes*, Rome, 1991, p. 17f.

<sup>12</sup> *Representing Jesus Christ himself. Identity and Prayer*, January 1st 1990, p. 15. It is not possible, within the limits of the present article, to show how the identity of the Brother was understood in the course of Institute history. Some valuable research has been done in this area by Br Pedro Maria GIL in his *Tres Siglos de identidad lasaliana, La relacion mision-espiritualidad a lo largo de la historia FSC*, 1994, Rome, N° 4 in the series *Lasallian Studies*. All we can do is to refer the reader to this work.

<sup>13</sup> The expression is that of M. Campos, CL 45,352f.

#### Complementary themes

Association

Brothers of the Ch. schools

Christian teacher

Community

Employment

Gratuity

Hearts (to touch)

Imitation of Christ

Obedience

School

Stability

State

Vows

World (relations with)

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

The main references have been given in the text. The thesis of Br Maurice Auguste, "The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in search of its canonical status, from the origins (1679) to the Bull of Benedict XIII (1725)", in French, (CL 11, Rome, 1962), continues to be the basic text. Important also are the Circulars of the Superior Generals which remind the Brothers of their "religious" duties.

Some idea of the great number and diversity of pious organisations set up by the Brothers in the course of the centuries and throughout the world can be gained from the series "Bulletin of the Institute of the FSC" and from District publications and from those of educational establishments and Former Students Associations.

A modern view which goes beyond the confines of the Lasallian Family can be gained from the excellent work of Gabriel Le Bras (who oversaw the work and wrote its preface): "Les Ordres religieux" (two illustrated 4to volumes, Paris, Flammarion, 1980). The section dealing with the La Salle Brothers is in vol. 2, pp. 710-736.

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