



Brother Pierre Josse.

He was born on June 22nd, 1928 in Arradon (Morbihan) France. He entered the junior novitiate in Quimper in 1941 and received the habit in 1944 at Kerplouz (Auray). His scholasticate was at Hérouville. He earned the Baccalaureate in Physical Sciences and the Licentiate in Letters. He made his perpetual profession at Quimper in 1953. After teaching in Quimper, Auray (Kerplouz), Kérozer (junior novitiate), Hérouville (scholasticate) and Brest, he became director at Quimper (Kérivoal) in 1965. He served at the novitiate in Athis-Mons in 1970 and at Lorient in 1972. After being a Delegate at the 1976 General Chapter, he was Visitor of Brittany until 1985. He was Director of Ste Barbe Saint-Etienne until his appointment as General Councillor in 1987 to take the place of the deceased Brother Eugene Bodel



Brother Gerard Rummery.

He was born on March 7th, 1931, at Blayney (New South Wales), Australia. He entered the junior novitiate at Oakhill in 1946. He received the habit in 1947 at Oakhill. He began his teaching career at Malvern in 1951 and made his final vows at Castle Hill in 1956. He studied in England from 1969 to 1972, earning a doctorate in Philosophy with a specialty in catechetics. He was a member of the CIL staff in Rome in 1973. He taught at Castle Hill, Australia, from 1974 to 1983. He served as Director of CIL from 1983 to 1985. A member of the Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter of 1986, he was named a Delegate to that Chapter by Brother Superior and was elected General Councillor.



Brother Dominique Samne.

He was born on July 27th, 1945, in Sapone, Burkina Faso. He entered the juniorate in Toussiana in 1961 and received the habit in 1964, in the novitiate at Toussiana, where he made his first vows in 1965. He attended the scholasticate in Bobo Dioulasso. He made his perpetual vows in 1970, in Ouagadougou. He completed the Brevet in Toussiana in 1962 and earned the DUEG in English in 1969 and the Licentiate in English in 1971 while studying in Brussels. He became Director of the novitiate in Toussiana in 1974 and was a Delegate to the General Chapters of 1976 and 1986. He was Visitor of West Africa from 1979 until 1988, when he became Director of the inter-African novitiate in Kinshasa, Zaire.



Brother Raymundo Suplido.

He was born on May 13th, 1947, in Valladolid (Negros Occidental), Philippines. He entered the juniorate in Manila in 1961 and received the habit in 1963, in the Manila novitiate. After first vows in 1964, he entered the Green Hills scholasticate. He made final vows at Bacolod in 1972. He earned the Bachelor of Arts degree and the Bachelor of Science in Education, as well as the Licentiate in Psychology. After teaching in Iligan City, Bacolod, Lipa City, and Manila, he became Director of student Brothers in Manila in 1977. In the 1980s he was Director of the novitiate. In 1990 he became Visitor of the Philippines. He was a Delegate to the General Chapter of 1993.

**THE FINAL PHASE
OF THE CHAPTER**

20. AUDIENCE WITH H. H. JOHN PAUL II

May 14th 1993

**PRESENTATION
OF CAPITULANTS TO THE HOLY FATHER**

Brother John Johnston, Superior General

Most Holy Father,

It is an honor and a pleasure for me to present to you the Capitulants and staff members of our 42nd General Chapter. We consider this special audience an extraordinary grace. We are profoundly grateful for the opportunity to manifest to you, Vicar of Jesus Christ, our love for the Church, our uncompromising loyalty, our pledge of obedience to you as Sovereign Pontiff, and our commitment to serve the Church faithfully and zealously in the ministry of Christian education.

This Chapter is taking place during the period of preparation for the Synod on Consecrated Life and its Role in the Church and in the World. During the past six weeks of intense prayer and fraternal dialogue, we have sought to clarify and deepen our understanding of our own identity and mission as **Christifideles laici consecrati**.

Our particular contribution to the New Evangelization is the human and Christian education of youth, poor youth particularly, with the Catholic school as the privileged instrument. This mission is today a "shared mission", a mission in which Brothers and lay men and women collaborate. For this reason, we invited twenty of our collaborators to participate as Consultants during two weeks of the Chapter. Their contribution was truly extraordinary. Extraordinary also in recent years has been the response of our lay collaborators to the invitation to share not only in our work, but also in our spirit, that is to say, to live their baptismal consecration inspired by the life and teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle.

During the past six weeks, we have come to a more precise understanding of our shared mission and of the mutual relations which should be maintained between ourselves as

Christifideles laici consecrati and our collaborators as **Christifideles laici saeculares**. We perceive our association as a communion within that great Communion which is the Church, a communion of some sixty thousand men and women at the service of 850,000 young people in eighty-one countries, a mission that is lived in all of the "situations" you describe in **Redemptoris Missio**.

During this Chapter we have challenged ourselves and our Brothers everywhere to a greater commitment to the ongoing transformation of mind and heart that our vocation as **consecrati** requires. With the help of our Consultants, we have made decisions that we think will make our mission of human and Christian education more efficacious and more available to the poor and marginalized within our own countries as well as abroad. Among these decisions is a commitment to make available 100 Brothers and a certain number of our Lasallian partners for missionary service, over and above our present commitments.

In short, Holy Father, we are striving to be a Communion of **Christifideles laici consecrati** and **Christifideles laici saeculares**, striving, through creative commitment to human and Christian education, to generate communities which will in turn generate other communities, communities in which men and women are liberated from the evils of destitution, hunger, racism, ethnic hatred, social and political injustice, violence, crime, and war, communities in which all are able to live in mutual respect and peace, to live as brothers and sisters, to live as children of God.

It is in these dispositions, Most Holy Father, that we await your words of direction, guidance, and encouragement, convinced that your message will be a blessing for us, for our Chapter, for our Institute and those associated with us, and for the mission that God has confided to us.

**ALLOCUCION
OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II**

**BE FAITHFUL
TO THE CHARISM
OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE.**

Dear Brothers of the Christian Schools,

1. I bid you welcome! At the end of the 42nd General Chapter of your Institute, you asked to meet the Pope in order to testify to your fidelity to the Apostolic See. I thank you very much for this gesture, which I appreciate, and I greet all of you most cordially. I express my congratulations and best wishes in particular to Brother John Johnston, who has been elected Superior General for a second term. Acknowledging his generous spirit of availability, I assure him of my prayer for him and the members of the new General Council. I am equally grateful for the kind words he expressed to me in your name.

2. Your founder, St. John Baptist de La Salle, did not want the members of your religious family to embrace the priesthood because he felt that the educational ministry was so absorbing that it justified a true "consecration", requiring all the Brothers' time and energy. The Institute, which he founded in Rheims in 1680, grew over the centuries; you are now approximately 8,000 religious involved in teaching some 900,000 students, in more than 80 countries.

In their activity the Brothers of the Christian Schools are helped by seculars trained as teachers, catechists and pastoral workers, who want to follow the methods and objectives which mark the "Lasallian" charism. Some of the representatives participated in your General Chapter for the first time.

During your Chapter assembly you have attentively analysed the experience you gained, facing with courage and discernment the challenges of the present and the future. The goal of your apostolate has not changed: to proclaim the Gospel in the world of the school. In this perspective you have reflected carefully on your vocation, on your identity as Brothers, an identity to be rediscovered in the light of the Church's teaching and the "signs of the times" as well, in order to be ready to respond to the expectations of contemporary society. Thus you have expressed your common desire for a new missionary effort and a generous apostolic involvement in service to the Church.

Your mission, dear Brothers, is important and difficult; you must accomplish it at a time of considerable change in society. Be faithful to the charism of your Founder. Entirely given to the Lord, consecrate yourselves without respite to the Christian education of youth. May that remain the essential characteristic of your work! Put into practice the high ideal lived, in the footsteps of your Founder, by memorable educators such as Brother Bénilde, Brother Scubilion, Brother Arnold and your eight confrères martyred in Turon, Asturias, whom I beatified.

Following the example of St. John Baptist de La Salle, you are also attentive and receptive to the divine plan and ready to fulfil it; in all circumstances be teachers, witnesses to Christ, Christian educators, by your word and example.

3. Dear Brothers, your apostolate in the Church makes you the first witnesses of hope in the face of the uncertainty, doubts and problems which young people today are experiencing with so much restlessness.

Every Christian educator is called in the Lord's name, to inspire his students to respect the truth, to have confidence and optimism in shaping their future, and to have the Christian virtue of Hope. Your Founder used to urge his Brothers to treat their students with a fatherly, firm hand, but with tenderness as well, in order to draw them towards the good as well as to depend on it. By making these sentiments your own, dear Brothers, you will be true apostles of youth.

Always put Christ and his saving Gospel at the centre of your reflection, hopes and action, so that all you do may be for his glory and the good of souls.

St. John Baptist de La Salle had a fervent love for the Blessed Virgin Mary. May she be with you in your educational work! Remember that your Founder used to tell his Brothers that true devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary would give them confidence and help them to progress on the path of salvation. In particular he insisted on the daily recitation of the Rosary, in which you love to meditate on the mysteries together with the Mother of Jesus.

In order to encourage you and help you in your mission of evangelisation and your search for holiness, I give you my Apostolic Blessing, which I gladly extend to all your confrères your co-workers, your students and their families.



Audience with Pope John Paul II. In addition to the Capitulars, Chapter secretaries and helpers and Brothers of the Generalate were able to attend.

21. MESSAGE OF THE 42nd GENERAL CHAPTER TO THE BROTHERS

Dear Brothers,

As this 42nd General Chapter comes to a close, we address a word of thanks to you. You did not leave the work of the Chapter to us alone. You were present with us in your prayers, in your many notes, in the questionnaires you filled out and in the careful work of the Preparatory Committee.

Early into the work of the Chapter we experienced the extraordinary blessing of belonging to an international Institute. Our time together has made us realise what a significant presence of the Church we are in our numerous and diversified educational apostolates throughout the world. We are also aware of the many urgent and unanswered calls for our presence in so many places.

Our Founder "deeply moved"

We are convinced that if John Baptist de La Salle, canon of Rheims, stood on the steps of the cathedral today and gazed upon our society, he would be as "deeply moved" today as he was over three hundred years ago (R. 11). He would also see in the hearts of many a searching for the meaning of life and a hunger for justice and solidarity with one another. He would be touched by their yearning to experience the love of a God who wants all to be saved. But he would also see the dignity and rights of so many people, young and adults alike, abused on an interpersonal, national and international level. He would see many poor and abandoned people, left to themselves with little chance of a better life. He would say what he said then, "God has had the goodness to remedy so great a misfortune by the establishment of the Christian Schools..." (MTR, 2:1).

Today, in 1993, we are persuaded that John Baptist de La Salle would again resign his canonry and form a group of teachers with whom he would live in community, and they would call themselves "Brothers," Brothers living a contagious brotherhood among themselves, for their students and with others who wish to be associated with them in their work.

Framework for deliberations

We were assisted in our work at the very beginning of the Chapter by two inspiring presentations from experts in sociology and the religious life. They urged us to read the signs of the times and to understand our role as consecrated laymen in religious life in a changing world and church.

A "Shared Mission"

Shortly after the opening of the Chapter, new faces appeared in our midst. Twenty Consultants, men and women from all over the world, came to join us in our work. We were living a historic moment. For the first time in the history of our General Chapters, people other than Capitulants took an active part in a Chapter.

In the face of the increasing challenge to the Institute in its educational mission of evangelising and being evangelised, our Lasallian partners were telling us that we were not alone. A feeling caught hold of the Chapter that sharing the mission is an unmistakable sign of the times. The modest sub-title – "A Shared Mission" – in article 17 of the Rule is now seen as the bold title of a new chapter in the history of the Institute.

The discreet reminder in our Rule that the charism and spirituality of St. John Baptist de La Salle go beyond the confines of the Institute and are a gift and inspiration to others as well (146) began to take on tangible form. This new life we see in our shared mission means that a way of looking upon ourselves as the only authorised agents of the Institute's mission is obsolete. In our united commitment to the world, diversity of vocations is diversity of vocations.

Because of the importance of shared mission in the life of the Institute today, this Chapter will address a message "To The Worldwide Lasallian Family," Brothers and Lasallian partners alike. We are convinced that God is calling us to encourage this collaboration in a common mission.

Consecrated laymen in religious life

In this larger perspective, we tried to gain a better understanding of our role in the movement of lay participation in the life and mission of the Church. We also tried to appreciate the key role we as Brothers have as primary witnesses of the spirit and charism of St. John Baptist de La Salle for all who share the mission of the Institute.

Recognising the indispensable necessity of our Lasallian partners in the mission of the Institute, we reflected upon our life as lay religious. We reaffirmed the importance of integrating all dimensions of our lives – our consecration, our apostolic work, our community life, our prayer life – around our faith in Jesus Christ as disciples united in brotherhood. We reflected on the crucial importance of attracting young men to join us as Brothers in "association for the educational service of the poor through education" (R. 39). Our Consultants made it clear to us that they see this fostering of the Brothers' vocation as part of their responsibility as well.

The vision of the Rule

In the early stages of the Chapter we also felt a renewed commitment to walk forward in the light shed by our Rule on our life and mission given us in our Rule. The Chapter is encouraged by the many Brothers throughout the Institute who are making generous efforts to appreciate and live our Rule.

Available for mission

As we reflected on our Rule, our conviction grew stronger that in fidelity to our Founder's charism, we, with our Lasallian partners, must articulate a missionary policy in keeping with the spirit of the "new evangelisation" effort in the Church, in both developed and developing countries of all faiths. This policy must capitalise on the dynamic principle in the Institute of interdependence, both in personnel and in finances.

This means that we must be ready to go where the educational needs are urgent, and in a special way to the poor and abandoned. One of the most emotional sessions in the General Assembly centred on consideration of a proposition calling for a "task force" of 100 Brothers and a number of Lasallian partners who will be trained for such service within the next four years. They will be sent to create new educational apostolates, to renew and strengthen existing ones and to train Brothers and Lasallian partners, especially in developing sectors of the Institute. One could sense in the reflections on the proposition that a true Lasallian chord had been touched in the hearts of the Capitulants.

Three moving occasions

As this 42nd General Chapter draws to a close, three particularly moving occasions will remain in our memories.

First, at their final meeting with us, the Consultants addressed a vibrant message of gratitude, encouragement and support to the Capitulants, and through us to every one of you. We realise more than ever that shared mission is a way of life for us in the Institute. Secondly, the arrival at a Chapter for the first time in 25 years of Brothers from Vietnam brought home to us the true meaning of "Brother," of our solidarity among ourselves in a special form of brotherhood. Thirdly, the election of the Brother Superior General and the General Council reminded us that authority in the Institute is at the service of the life and work of the

"They will flourish in old age" (Ps 91:15)

Brothers, you among us who are in or who are approaching retirement, each of you has "a role to play in the vitality of the Institute" (R. 145). Your identity and value as Brothers are not at all diminished because of advanced years and declining energy. You are a living example of the reminder in our Rule that "the first apostolate of the Brothers consists in the witness of their consecrated life" (R. 24). Many of you can take and have taken on new commitments beneficial for others and fulfilling for you. We count on you to transmit our spiritual and educational patrimony to new generations of Lasallians. We count on you to show young people that to live as a Brother can be a fulfilling and happy life. This can be a powerful call to young men to join us. The large number of elder Brothers in our Institute is indeed a grace, for which we all thank God, and a witness to the Church and the world to the possibility and value of faithful service in the religious life.

"The day's burden and the heat" (Mt 20:12)

Brothers, those among you who are fully active, you also know that the gifts and talents you put at the service of your students, of your Brothers, of your Lasallian partners come to you from the Lord. Thank you for sharing those gifts and talents so generously, in your responsibilities of teaching, administration, formation, support work and many other forms of educational service. You are examples of zeal and dedication to all of us. Invite young people to join us in vowed brotherhood so that they too can share their talents with others in a special way. To ask someone to become a Brother is to show great confidence in him and to give testimony to the esteem we have for our vocation.

"I trusted in You since I was young" (Ps 71:5)

Brothers, those who are the younger among us, you should remember that John Baptist de La Salle was 29 years old when he became involved with a handful of school teachers. That involvement would later result in the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. And as he did, live your life, accompanied by your mentors, in a dynamic itinerary, urged on by the critical educational needs of our day. In you we find the creative forces and vitality in the Institute which will help us overcome the tendency to keep unchanged the existing structures, even when they become obsolete. We have taken measures that will make it possible for more of you to be present at the next General Chapter to be held in the year 2000 so that you can help chart the future of our Institute.

A Chapter ends, a new chapter begins

Coming here we felt, as many of you did, that at this critical time in our history the Chapter had to provide us with a focus and a clear direction. At the same time we wondered how the Chapter could do that, or indeed, if it could. Even during the Chapter, at times, differences of culture, language, experiences, hopes and points of view created perplexity and tensions.

Now that we look back over our experience of these past weeks, we rejoice that the Chapter has succeeded in bringing us together in our love for our Institute and its mission. We achieved a remarkable union of minds and hearts on substantial matters. This Chapter suggests that the Institute, in its international richness and diversity, is a living parable of the possibility of transforming a world that "still retains the hope of being set free" (Rom 8:20).

The prayer we said throughout the Institute for the intention of the Chapter asks the "Lord, God of freedom, to make us docile to the Holy Spirit and to the will of God in our regard." We made a sincere effort to respond to movement of the Spirit during this Chapter. Our hope now is that all of us throughout the Institute continue to pray and work, as did our Founder, animated by a spirit of faith and zeal.

Rome, 15 May 1993

22. A MESSAGE ABOUT THE SHARED MISSION TO THE WORLDWIDE LASALLIAN FAMILY FROM THE 42nd GENERAL CHAPTER

1. To all of you, men and women who are related in some way to a Lasallian enterprise, and above all to you who day to day share our work and mission in the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle, we send this message of invitation and encouragement. We Brothers are Capitulants from 80 countries, assembled to determine the major directions of the Institute for the next seven years, and we invite you to welcome this message from the Chapter of 1993. We, ourselves, have experienced this Chapter as an historic event, as an "irresistible and irreversible stage in our history," to quote the words of one of the Consultants.

2. And so, for the first time, there were invited to the Chapter twenty Consultants, men and women from around the world chosen from those who were among the most committed in sharing the mission of the Institute. Some of these Consultants are perhaps known to you. They helped us to become aware of the great diversity of situations from which they come. Their example touched us deeply and encouraged us to write to you.

A Time of Grace for us all

3. In our lives, there are special, powerful moments when the past takes on a new meaning, the events of the present have a stronger impact and the future is faced with renewed determination. We would like to share with you a conviction we reached as a result of our interaction, namely, that God is calling each one according to his or her own vocation, to accomplish together the mission confided to St. John Baptist de La Salle and to the Institute he founded.

4. In the light of the experience of the last twenty years, the Chapter re-affirms the irreplaceable role of those men and women (lay persons, priests and religious) who carry out this mission. The Institute brings them together to work in association "to procure a human and Christian education for young people and especially the poor".

United for Children and Young People

5. Aware of the dignity of each person, we rejoice in the rich diversity of our respective vocations and the responsibilities these imply. What unites us is our common reference to St. John Baptist de La Salle and a continuous striving to enter more fully into his spirit. Belonging to the Lasallian Family commits us to work together to respond to the educational needs of the young.

6. Shared mission is a response to the real needs of young people today. We know the difficulties they are faced with, as well as the values they support. They need educators who are inspired by St. John Baptist de La Salle, Patron of Christian educators. Because of our professional skills, our spirit of openness, our educational vision, our commitment as men and women in the school, in society and in the Church, young people can discover elements to incorporate into their maturing personality. To engage in a mission such as this, we are called to form integrated teams of educators and to develop our skills and our personal and spiritual growth.

7. In order to take on the challenges of the world of education, we need to develop and deepen our mutual understanding, to respect our differences and to trust in one another. When Christians or persons of other religions live together in harmony, love and the service of others, they reveal those human and spiritual values typical of the Lasallian spirit: values such as the interior life, respect for the family, the dignity of women, the rights of children and concern for the poor. Whether we are Christians, members of another religion or humanists, we are called to take our place in the mission that the Institute receives from God, whose Spirit is at work in every culture and in every religious tradition.

Brothers throughout the World

8. As Brothers in Chapter, we have something special to say to our Brothers throughout the world. Let us consider as a sign of the times the call to share the mission of the Institute and the way this call enriches its living tradition. As Brothers, let us be, in a manner of speaking, the heart, the memory and the guarantors of the Lasallian charism.

Today, shared mission asks us as Brothers to make visible the call to live the gospel in depth. We should be readily available for priority projects for the educational service of the poor where others either cannot or will not go. Our vow of "association for the educational service of the poor" is an indispensable sign of fidelity for all those engaged in the distinctive mission of the Institute.

Formation for Mission

9. Today, more than ever, Lasallians from every country, we must discover together new directions for mission. Our diversity gives this a deeper significance. The mission of the Institute would suffer greatly if each of us tried to work without reference to the others. It would be unproductive if everything were to be forced into one single model. In order to coordinate the response of all of us to the needs of the young, Brothers and Consultants at the Chapter recognised the need for a programme of formation in the Lasallian spirit at District or local level. We encourage each person to take up as much formation for himself or herself as possible. This requires a study to identify the needs of our world and a discernment together of the means needed to respond to them.

10. Brothers and colleagues, united in St. John Baptist de La Salle for the temporal and eternal well-being of the young, let us become involved together in the evangelisation of our local culture. Let us welcome and support the different vocations of lay people, Sisters, Brothers and Priests.

Our communities of faith, our religious communities and our families can become sources of stimulation for this broad movement which is spreading, not only throughout the whole Church, but which involves men and women of other religious traditions. All this provides a wider context for shared mission as a growing reality in the Church today, thanks to the promotion of the laity, the ecumenical movement and the appeal of Pope John Paul II for a new evangelisation for the year 2000.

A Priority

11. The sharing of Mission will be a priority at all levels in the Institute during the next seven years. We are convinced that it is day by day and together that we must live out and evolve the shared mission where we are. Our experience together in Rome has been so rich that we encourage each Lasallian to live this experience at the local level. Let us take the steps required to be involved in dialogue, and plan for action.

12. Today, more than ever, young people need to be accompanied by teams of adults. These teams need to be made up of adults who are readily available, open to human, spiritual and gospel values and close to the young.

May 15th 1993

23. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Brother John Johnston, Superior General

May 15th 1993

Among the many moving experiences I have had as Vicar and as Superior, one of the most striking and most memorable occurred in Djibouti, just six months after the last General Chapter.

Djibouti is an Islamic country. There are very few Christians. In Tadjourah the Brothers operate a Centre d'Apprentissage for young people who have dropped out of ordinary schools and are unemployed. The people of Djibouti are traditionally nomadic and pastoral, in the strict sense of that word. The Brothers are giving them the opportunity to acquire a certain number of technical skills which will in turn help them to earn their living.

Brother Bernard Bauffe, Director of the Center, arranged for me to visit the homes of two of the young Muslim students. As the four of us drove towards the village, enjoying a very pleasant conversation, one of the young men suddenly cried out, "Stop the car." Brother Bernard immediately pulled over to the side of the road. The young man darted from the car, ran down an incline on the other side of the road, and chased away a dog that was attacking a goat. The young man picked up the severely wounded goat and walked back up the incline, carrying it in his arms. Several men responded to his call for help, but it was too late: the goat was dead.

The Good Shepherd

That experience has given me a new understanding and appreciation of the Good Shepherd parable and of our Founder's meditations on that parable. The Good Shepherd is, of course, Christ. The parable teaches us, in the words of one scripture scholar, that God's mercy contradicts all human expectations of God's attitude towards sinners and his treatment of them. It teaches us that God's mercy is as "foolish" as that of a shepherd who abandons 99 sheep in order to save one.

The Founder urges us, Brothers of the Christian Schools, to envisage Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd who seeks the lost sheep and to remember that we are called to take Jesus' place today and to make Christ's love and mercy a reality for those he confides to our care. To be Christ, the Good Shepherd, in the world of education and among children and young people is indeed our vocation as Brothers of the Christian Schools. The Good Shepherd is a model for each of us individually, for our communities, for our Districts, and for the Institute. The Good Shepherd is a model also for every person who shares our mission. More than that. It is a model for the entire Lasallian Family.

But, of course, like all parables, this one must be read with care. The parable is about the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. It is not about the sheep. The parable in no way advocates a paternalistic relationship to people whom we consider to be sheep. Considered intelligently, however, the parable can inspire us. Permit me to use my experience in Djibouti as the point of departure for a very brief reflection upon the decisions of this Chapter.

What kind of people are we?

The action of that nineteen or twenty year old Muslim reveals much about his character. He is obviously a loving and caring person. His focus of attention is not himself but others. His cheerful participation in the conversation during the automobile drive did not blind him to a need which required an immediate response. He was attentive. He was alert to the needs of those around him, even to those of animals. He responded decisively and boldly. He was not like the priest and Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan, men who were perhaps so preoccupied with maintaining their prearranged itinerary and intentions that they closed their eyes to a situation which might oblige them to change their plans. It is instructive also to note that this young man did not succeed. The goat died. But he made the effort. With pain, he accepted what had happened, returned to the car, and in a short time, regained his composure.

I think that the most fundamental question we face today is, what kind of people are we. What do we stand for? What are our values? What are the principles and priorities that govern our lives - as individuals, as members of our communities and Districts, as Institute? During these last six weeks, we Capitulants, directly and indirectly, have wrestled with questions concerning our principles, our values, our priorities, and the depth of our commitment.

We Brothers of the Christian Schools are called to be men who have integrated - that is to say, made one - the three dimensions of our vocation. For this reason we have examined the quality of our lives as consecrated men, as community men, as apostolic men. We have sought also to understand more profoundly the implications of the evolution that is taking place in the exercise of our mission. More specifically, we have sought to deepen our understanding of shared mission and to clarify our specific role, contribution, and responsibility in that mission as members of a religious institute. We have prepared a beautiful message through which we hope to communicate successfully to our Brothers what we have experienced and to invite them to live with greater authenticity.

Fully aware that to BE the men we say we want to be - to close that gap to which so many references have been made during these weeks - we must be men of faith, men of prayer, men of zeal, men of community. To nourish that steady growth in prayer already evident in the Institute, we have recommended that 1995 be declared a **Year of Prayer**. With regard to community, which we have called a sign of hope and source of life, we have prepared orientations, recommendations, and propositions, which, when accepted and implemented, will surely foster greater depth in our life together as Brothers. The Chapter has kept in focus all our Brothers, but has given particular attention to our young Brothers and our aging Brothers.

Spirit of the Institute

Conscious that "that which is of the utmost importance, and to which the greatest attention should be given in an Institute 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," the Chapter has given careful consideration to both initial and ongoing formation, as well as to the formation of formators. Our decisions, if implemented wisely, will contribute to growth in that spirit which reveals whether or not, or to what extent, we are "living members" of the Institute, men who are faith-filled, loving, proactive, that is to say, men who are attentive, responsive, creative, decisive - characteristics so evident in our young Muslim friend.

Our Experience

In my opinion the quality of the reports, propositions, and debate at this Chapter has been exceptionally high. The prayer and Eucharistic celebrations have been extremely rich. The various festive celebrations have nourished our sense of unity and brotherhood. Yes, there were some disagreements and misunderstandings, particularly in reference to the elections. But those difficulties should be viewed objectively and relativized. The important thing is that we profit from this experience by creating at the next Chapter an electoral process which is inspired by faith and love, a process which incorporates dialogue with all persons concerned, a process which is constructive and efficacious.

Our Shared Mission

The experience of the moving and fruitful weeks we spent with the Consultants is historic and prophetic. It is prophetic in that the participation of the Consultants has itself communicated, and will continue to communicate, a powerful and very important message to the entire Lasallian world - and, I think, to other religious institutes and to the Church generally. Through constructive dialogue we have progressed in the formulation of common goals and common language. We have prepared for the Lasallian Family a written message about our mission of human and Christian education, a message which invites both the Brothers and our partners to ever deeper levels of participation in the Lasallian heritage. We have clarified and strengthened our relationship with the Hermanas Guadalupanas De La Salle, and have become

better acquainted with the Congregation of Lasallian Sisters and the Union of Catechists. With regard to all those who share in the mission and spirit of St. De La Salle, but particularly those who wish to live their baptismal consecration in some form of Lasallian group, association, or community, we have provided guidelines which can form the basis for dynamic and creative action during the next several years.

Educational Service of the Poor

Several days ago, the proposition to make available one hundred additional Brothers and a certain number of Lasallian partners for missionary service stimulated a magnificent exchange of views. The quantity and quality of the interventions revealed a strong desire, together with a sense of commitment, to take more seriously the orientations of past Chapters and of our **Rule** that call for a significant reordering of our apostolic priorities, a reordering that will make progressively the educational service of the poor - at home and abroad - the effective priority of the District. That proposition is truly a prophetic gesture, one that, on the local level, must be explained, justified, defended, and, above all, implemented.

During the Chapter there have been, of course, many more directives, orientations, and recommendations treating of all aspects of our mission of human and Christian education, decisions which will contribute significantly to the ongoing revitalization of our apostolic activities everywhere in the world.

This Chapter has, I think, made very important decisions concerning governmental structures and the financing of the services of the Central Government of the Institute. But, of course, implementation of these decisions is the task that lies ahead of us. For successful implementation we - the persons who made the decisions - will have to provide strong leadership.

Vocations

An issue that has never been far from our hearts and minds throughout the past six weeks has been that of vocations. We have examined directly the question of the pastoral ministry of vocations and provided orientations for strengthening that ministry. But I am convinced that all the work of this Chapter can and will contribute to the fostering of vocations. I think that many of the young men whom the Lord is inviting to be Brothers will say **YES** when they see us as men who reveal in our daily life that we know who we are and what we are about, that we have significant and clear goals to which we are corporately and enthusiastically committed, and that in our personal, communal, and apostolic life we are totally committed to becoming the men we describe in our documents.

Furthermore, I believe that the work of this Chapter will help us to grow in confidence and pride as Brothers. That renewed belief in ourselves will give us the boldness we require to invite qualified young men to consider our vocation. Brothers, we must be instruments of Christ in extending to young people the invitation, "Come, follow me." Experience clearly indicates that when such invitations are extended

with total respect for the freedom of young people, they, far from being offended, are truly honored.

The Destiny of the Institute.... Our Personal Responsibility

This has been the third General Chapter in which I have participated directly, and the fourth which I have studied carefully and tried to implement. I find myself recalling the words of Brother Charles Henry in his introduction to the **Declaration**:

"A document of the Chapter, or even the General Chapter itself, must not be confused with the adapted renewal of the Institute. This renewal is something yet to be realized, and its effective realization is confided to the common effort of all the members of the Institute."

I have recalled also those challenging words of article 142 of the **Rule**:

"The life and development of the Institute depend primarily on the mystery of and the power of grace. By the gift of freedom, however, the Lord has willed to place the destiny of the Institute in the hands of the Brothers."

Brothers, as has been said a number of times during the past six weeks, what we need today is not a new vision, but rather a renewed effort to walk forward in the light of the vision expressed so well in the **Rule**. The major task the Institute faces is a task that cannot be accomplished by a General Chapter or by the Central Government of the Institute. The task of closing that gap between the ideals presented to us in the **Rule** and the lived reality can be accomplished only on the local level. The transformation we seek will occur when, in the words of the **Declaration**, each Brother at the local level starts out along the path of spiritual conversion and determines to have a personal share in the great community work of renewal and adaptation. Transformation will occur when, in the words of the **Rule**, the Brothers at the local level are strongly committed to work together for greater authenticity and fidelity.

Brothers, as Capitulants, we have the serious responsibility to serve as leaders. When Brothers say, "There is nothing we can do about our District or community," we must answer: "On the contrary. Let's look at the concrete, constructive steps we can take." When other Brothers say, "This is the way things are in our District or community. Change is not possible," we have to say: "No, Brothers, we are not governed by something outside of ourselves. We can indeed change the situation if we decide to change it." When still others complain, "The existence of so many problems today is the fault of our past and present superiors," we have to say: "Brothers, let's stop blaming others; let's take responsibility for our lives and act positively and effectively."

In short, Brothers, we Capitulants have to be "proactive" people, people who take responsibility for our own lives. We have to strive to help others stop "reacting" to situations and to start "acting" constructively. We must not allow our future to be shaped by factors outside of ourselves. Our destiny as an Institute is in our hands. If we commit ourselves unreservedly to helping our Brothers, our communities, and our Districts to become more faithful and more authentic, the

Institute will indeed experience that new Spring for which we all long and pray.

Union of Minds and Hearts

In his Testament our Founder states that he commends to God all the Brothers to whom God has united him. He is convinced in faith that God has called him to live in union with his Brothers. In like manner it is God, God in his Providence, that is to say, in his love and concern for young people, who has called us to association with men who have received a similar call in nearly half the countries of the world.

In that same Testament St. De La Salle urges the Brothers "to maintain an intimate union among themselves". Brothers, let's follow our Founder's example. Let's commend to God all those to whom God has united us. Let's commend to God today on this feast of St. De La Salle all the Brothers of the Institute. But in a particular way, let us, Capitulants, consciously and **BY NAME** commend one another to God.

Brothers, we are men of many different cultures, nations, languages, and histories. But we are one. We are one because we are all children of the same loving Father, because we are all brothers of Jesus Christ and therefore brothers of one another, and because we are all sons of John Baptist de La Salle. We express our vocation in our particular culture. For this reason we are diverse. We are diverse, but we are one. We enjoy unity in diversity.

At this time when the world is experiencing a disconcerting amount of ethnic, national, racial, religious, cultural division, let us Brothers of the Christian Schools be truly a communion of persons, a communion of Good Shepherds, an international community of consecrated men nourishing that communion of Good Shepherds which is the entire Lasallian Family, an international communion of Lasallians with a commitment to generate other communions.

Convinced with our Founder, therefore, Brothers, that "Union . . . is truly a precious gem", let us **BE BROTHERS** to one another, **BE BROTHERS** to all those with whom we are associated, **BE BROTHERS** to all those whom God confides to our care.

As Capitulants of the 42nd General Chapter, let us dedicate ourselves, together and by association, to helping the Brothers of our Districts, Sub-Districts, and Delegations to understand and to put into practice what we have decided, and thus contribute significantly to the ongoing transformation of our beloved Institute, an Institute that is needed more than ever by "the young, the poor, the world, and the Church". (**Rule** 141).

I invite you now to stand, to join hands, and to sing the antiphon "Ecce Quam Bonum" - Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brothers to dwell together in unity." (Ecce Quam Bonum...)

I now declare the 42nd General Chapter to be closed.



Brother Superior General with the General Council.
**First row, from the left: Brothers Raymundo Suplido, Dominique Samné, John Johnston (Superior General),
Pierre Josse. Second row: Brothers Alvaro Rodríguez (Vicar General),
Marc Hofer (elected by the General Council on May 25, 1993), Gerard Rummery and Martín Corral.**

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**CHAPTER
CAPÍTULO
CHAPITRE**



Roma '93