BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

LASALLIAN SAINTS
OF YESTERDAY AND... TOMORROW

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LASALLIAN SAINTS

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A gallery of Lasallian saints who represent only a part of that set of examples of human richness - immense and very different - that comes from the imitation of a unique model: Christ. They range from very captivating personalities (Miguel, Raphaël-Louis, Exupérien,…) to the “everyday saints” (Benildus, Mutien, Gregorio,…) and then to those who signed their fidelity to Jesus Christ with their blood (Solomon, Jaime Hilario, James Miller,…).

Are the saints merely leftovers from the past and useless today, or on the contrary, do we need models of lives full of meaning, today more than ever? It is up to the reader to think about it and to provide the answer.

Rome, May 15th 2007
In the Institute: Feast of St. John Baptist de la Salle
The known stories of holy Brothers are many, but much more numerous are those stories written only in heaven. These represent a secret treasure, on which the Institute has relied since the time of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. They are an underground spring which flows into the furthest and least known corners of our Institute’s map.

It would be good to relate the unknown holiness of the dozens of Brothers who never went beyond an everyday existence and who passed all of their lives unknown and unsung, making the ordinary actions of each day masterpiece, their total self-giving and love of God as their food, their sacrifices and self-restraint as their daily act of worship. This would be important and supply us with a good model, but it is not possible in a booklet like this. It is only right, however, before bringing forward some of the lives known to us, to pay tribute, recognition and praise to all of our “unknown saints” who have made a precious contribution to the remarkable history of our Congregation. Their holiness, even if it never makes it to the altar, have transformed many apparently ordinary lives into masterpieces of grace and have attracted so many blessings on the apostolic labors of all. On the other hand, if we were to compare the lives of these men of God with those of our saints officially beatified or canonized, we would find that the patterns they followed were the same, that the choices, the lifestyles and their response to the call of grace were similar.

“If you saved nothing in your youth, what will you have in old age?”
(Sirach 25,3)
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE

Here is a saint who, though he lived between the 17th and 18th centuries, has much to teach Catholics of today. First of all, there was his intuition that education is everyone’s right, a right that is as valid today as at any other time, even if those receiving the education are poor. Second, that schooling is a very serious matter, requiring people who are very well prepared once they choose to become teachers.

Born into a noble family on 30th April 1651, following the custom of his time for those aspiring to the priesthood, he was tonsured at the age of 11, installed as a canon at 16, a Master of Arts at 17 and a priest at 27. But he was not a priest pre-cast for a career that was chosen for him by others. De La Salle took his vocation very seriously, enthusiastically, and full of faith. He encountered well-meaning persons, keen on helping poor young people, but he soon realized that these well-meaning persons were inadequately prepared and were disorganized. He helped them create a community of teachers who would be inspired by Christians ideals, ideal that would help them understand the nature of a good school. But he soon ran into the short-sightedness of the clerical establishment, especially because his plan relied on lay religious – a kind of heresy in those days and something which also anticipated Vatican II’s insights by nearly three centuries.
To free himself from every hindrance, de La Salle resigned his canonry, distributed his wealth to the poor, made a vow to beg for his food if need be, and decided to live in common with the teachers in order to truly form them. That is how the Brothers of the Christian Schools came into being. To ensure that they stayed close to the common people and to their culture, he even forbade the Brothers to study Latin, the language of clerics and those in advanced positions.

He underwent much suffering in order to see his plan grow and develop, both because he remained faithful to the Pope (and this was a time of rampant Gallicanism) and because of the novelty of his schools, places where languages, commerce and technical drawing were taught.

Due to the machinations of the Writing Masters, whose monopoly in teaching writing was challenged by De La Salle’s schools, and the opposition of other vested interests in society, De La Salle’s leadership was disputed at the same time that some of his closest Brothers from the early foundation abandoned him. He accepted these and other crosses that followed. He died believing with serenity that this work was God’s will. Time was to prove him right. He was beatified in 1888, canonised in 1900 and proclaimed Patron of teachers in 1950.

*With the authorization of the author*
SAINT JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE
1651 – 1719
Principal events of his life

30.04.1651 Born in Rheims (France) of Louis de La Salle, magistrate and Nicole Moët de Brouillet. First-born of 11 children (8 boys and 3 girls); received his primary education within his family.

? 09.1661 Enrolled at the Collège des Bons Enfants:
- Teaching is done via Latin; Greek is studied also.
- Obtains his Maître-es-Arts.

07.01.1667 He is named Canon of the Rheims cathedral.

18.10.1670 He enrolls at the Seminary of St. Sulpice, in Paris and follows courses in theology at the Sorbonne.

20.07.1671 His mother dies (at the age of 38!).

09.04.1672 His father also dies (at the age of 47!). John is obliged to return to Rheims to take care of his siblings and of the family business.

.. .08.1675 Obtains a Graduate degree in Theology

26.01.1678 Completes a Doctorate in Theology

09.04.1678 De La Salle is ordained as a priest. His spiritual directors were wise and holy priests: Nicolas Roland, founder of the Sisters of the Child Jesus, and after Nicolas Roland’s death, Nicolas Barré, a Minim priest; he too was the Founder of a Congregation of Sisters.

09.03.1679 De La Salle meets Adrien Nyel at the door of the Sisters of the Child Jesus convent. Nyel came from Rouen, carrying a letter of recommendation from a cousin of John’s, Madame Maillefer. John promises Nyel to help him in the setting up of schools for poor boys in Rheims.

1679 - 1682 Landmarks in the foundation of this new society of the Christian Schools:

a) In order to improve both the minds and the manners of Mr. Nyel’s teachers, and to train them morally, John rents a house close to his own for them in 1679, since Nyel himself tended to be constantly on the move.

b) June 24th 1680: John offers these same teachers the hospitality of his own home and invites them to sit at table with his family. It is this date that is considered as the beginning of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.
c) De La Salle assumes complete responsibility for these teachers. He rented a house at Rue Neuve and he himself went to live with them (June 24th 1682).

1683 - 1684 **Radical Option for God:**
He becomes aware that he could not reconcile the duties of a Canon with those of directing and guiding the teachers. Following the advice of Father Barré:
- **he renounces his canonry** in favour of a poor priest; a *Te Deum* with the Brothers...and a storm within the De La Salle family followed this event.
- **He gives away his patrimony to the poor** (autumn 1684, while a serious famine hit that part of France). His patrimony was not used to endow the new foundation. He chose to rely fully on Providence.

10.06.1686 De La Salle goes on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Liesse (40 Km. from Rheims) and makes a vow of Obedience with 12 of his disciples.

27.02.1688 First school in **Paris**: Rue Princesse, in the parish of St. Sulpice.

1689 - 1690 Misunderstandings with members of the clergy... A number of his own Brothers walk out on him.

21.11.1691 **he makes “The Heroic Vow”** together with Nicolas Vuyard and Gabriel Drolin. They bind themselves “to maintain the schools, even if we were obliged to beg for alms and to live on bread alone”.

06.06.1694 **De La Salle makes perpetual vows** together with 12 Brothers.

... 09. 1702 Sends Brothers Gabriel and Gerard Drolin to **Rome** in order to:
- witness to his fidelity to the Roman Church (he used to sign his correspondence “Roman priest”)
- open a “papal school” in Rome.

1703 - 1705 The onset of a crop of difficulties:
- with members of the clergy: a new Superior is imposed on the Brothers, and the Brothers refuse to have him!
- with the writing masters who attack his schools and destroy its furniture...
- with the municipal authorities of Paris who fine him and forbid him to open new communities of teachers.

?...08.1705 John transfers the Novitiate (training school for young Brothers) to **Saint-Yon**, on the outskirts of **Rouen**.
1705 Good news from Rome: Bro. Gabriel is finally appointed as a teacher, although without a fixed post, without a salary, but in charge of a class at “Alli Otto Cantoni” (actually Largo dei Lombardi).

1705 - 1706 Opening of schools in the South of France: Avignon, Grenoble, Marseilles...

1709 Further good news: Bro. Gabriel has now been given charge of a Papal School in Via dei Cappuccini.

1711 De La salle travels to the south of France

1713 -1714 Once again difficulties and persecution...John withdraws from the public eye and seeks the peace of Parménie.

?...1714 The Brothers discover his whereabouts, order him to return and to resume direction of the Society.

22.05.1717 The first General Chapter elects Brother Bartholomew as Superior, the first after De La Salle.

07.04.1719 De La Salle dies in Rouen, in the early morning of Good Friday.

26.01.1725 Pope Benedict XIII issues the Bull “In apostolicae dignitatis solio”, approving the Society.


24.05.1900 Pope Leo XIII proclaims him a Saint.

15.05.1950 Pope Pio XII, proclaims him “Patron of All Teachers of Youth”

“Don’t speak about me with nostalgia because I am gone; speak with gratitude, because I lived.”

(L. Zukowskij)
Rome, Generalate FSC – Relics of St. John Baptist de La Salle
NOTABLE BROTHERS

MIGUEL FEBRES CORDERO
(Cuenca, Ecuador, 07. 11.1854 – Premiá de Mar, Spain, 09.02.1910)

Brother Miguel came from an upper middle class family in Ecuador, a family that did not appreciate the idea of one of its family members going off to join a religious Institute dedicated solely to teaching. This, they thought, would not allow him to follow a prestigious church career and would even exclude him from following some other honorable career such as that of a magistrate or a civil servant or a career in the army. His vocation as an educator began on the benches of the first school that the Congregation opened in Ecuador, thanks to the beneficial daily contact that he had with his teachers.

Brother Miguel was endowed with uncommon intelligence and wisdom He understood the importance of education and decided to dedicate himself to it with all of his energy and without hesitation. “My mission needs two organs - Mother Teresa used to say - hands for serving and a heart for loving.” In Brother Miguel’s case, the “hands” were his extraordinary intelligence and his incredible capacity for work, including his full time teaching and at all levels. From the primary grades to higher classes, from military academy cadets to catechism in first communion classes, he
succeeded in amassing a vast culture and in producing a considerable number of publications and textbooks (over a hundred titles) which were used not only in Ecuador but also in other Latin America’s countries. He lived completely for God and for his students.

Roberto Espinosa, the esteemed Ecuadorian professor, wrote: “Brother Miguel has been the best promoter of education in Ecuador, as a teacher, a headmaster and a writer.” His cultural and pedagogical contributions earned him membership in the National Academy of Ecuador and a Fellowship in the Royal Academy of Spain - this was on August 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1892. On that occasion he gave an Inaugural Lecture entitled “The influence of Christianity on morals, on the sciences, on letters and arts.” From the theme that he chose for his inaugural lecture, one that would introduce him to his colleagues and to the academic community of his country, he showed who he was. Having learned the art of talking with God, he spoke of God and in the name of God! “This spontaneous and candid man, whom so many people everywhere missed, offers himself to you as a possible example of spiritual experience of undoubtable value and of great attraction, inviting you above all to love, because before being anything else, Brother Miguel was in love with God and with humanity, God’s own image.”\textsuperscript{2}

The canonical process started by the diocese of Cuenca on January 19\textsuperscript{th} 1925, led to his beatification on October 30\textsuperscript{th} 1977 and later to his canonization on October 21\textsuperscript{st} 1984. We celebrate his liturgical feast on February 9\textsuperscript{th}.

\textsuperscript{1} Rivista Lasalliana, LI (1984) 4, 28
Brother Raphaël-Louis Rafiringa

(Antananarivo, Madagascar, …? 1856 – Fianarantsoa, May 19th 1919)

Brother Raphaël’s life journey is not very different from that of the Ecuadorian Brother Miguel, of whom he was a contemporary, except that Brother Raphaël’s life journey occurred in a totally different human, cultural, civil and religious context. Brother Raphaël was an authentic champion of the Catholic Faith in Madagascar. He too belonged to what might have been called the middle-class of the time in Madagascar, in service to the royal family. He certainly had attractive prospects ahead of him. But God’s plans and the young man’s choices pointed in a different direction. He too was the first student of the Brothers in that country. He too was endowed with a brilliant intelligence and a strong will, both of which helped him challenge his family’s ambitions for him and become a disciple of those dedicated missionaries – admittedly somewhat unusual – who had arrived in the Island a little earlier. He insistently asked to join them. The Brother who was responsible for accompanying him and forming him acceded to his request only after seven years’ apprenticeship. And with a marvellous result!

The future Brother Raphaël-Louis matured quickly and grew culturally, religiously and humanly. He was to show his character as a teacher, a translator of Malgache works into French works, and a writer of textbooks - in this work he was tireless. But a time came when, following riots and agitation for independence that rocked the Island, all foreign missionaries were expelled and Brother found himself elected vox populi as leader of the Island’s Catholics. This was an unexpected role, and it turned out to be incontrovertible proof of his uncommon abilities: forming catechists, organizing meetings, gatherings and paraliturgies in all parts of the Island, com-
posing pamphlets and compendia of Catholic doctrine, as well as writing hymns and poems. His influence was evidenced by the fact that when after three years’ absence foreign missionaries were allowed to return, they found with amazement that the Catholic communities were quite numerous and that the people had as much fervor as when they had left them.

In recognition of his literary output, when the Academy of Madagascar was created in 1902 Brother Raphaël was immediately named as a member, and his portrait is part of the gallery of eminent citizens of the great Island.

But he was not spared a humiliating cross. He was accused unjustly by one of his former catechists as having belonged to a secret society to which a number of intellectuals also belonged. As such he was arrested and imprisoned. But his other followers rallied to the rescue and succeeded in having him acquitted, carrying him back to his community in triumph. The stay in the unhygienic prison cell, unfortunately, had an adverse effect on Brother Raphaël’s health. To help him recover, he was sent to Fianarantsoa on the coast, but he did not recover, and it was there that he died on May 19th 1919. ³

The canonical process, started in the diocese of Antananarivo on June 1st 1995, has reached the initial stage in Rome. Before long our Brother will receive the title of Venerable.

In the group of Brothers who are “notables because of their apostolate and holiness” one who belongs by right is the Venerable.

**BROTHER EXUPÉRIEN MAS**  
(Poujol, Montpellier, 07.06.1829 – Paris, 31.01.1905)

There were some who considered him to be excessively strict, demanding, and insensitive. Maybe he was. He was certainly strict and exacting, primarily in regard to himself. Those who have examined the testimony of people who knew him well, and who have looked closely at his character as a man and as a religious, have also discovered many other qualities, qualities that place him among the outstanding figures of the Institute in the 19th century. George Rigault, who wrote a monumental history of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Librairie Plon, Paris, 1953), sees him above all as a promoter of “spiritual renewal.”

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4 G. Rigault, *Un rénovateur spirituel*, Ligel, Paris 1953
His vocation developed in an unusual way. The Mas family was well off, but their religious practice was tepid. Their plans for their eldest son Adrien had no religious dimension. To distract him from his religious inclinations, his father sent him to Nice to stay with a friend of the family. In this way the father thought that his son’s vocation would weaken and would melt away when faced with the worldly luxuries and easy-going ways of the city. But exposing him to these allurements in no way affected Adrien’s resolve, and when he returned to his native village he was even more determined to become a religious. This he did at the age of 18, becoming Brother Exupérien.

He grew to be an excellent teacher of literature in the secondary school that the Brothers ran at Béziers. Later he was named Director of Novices in Paris, on the rue Oudinot, and in 1873 he was called to shoulder even higher responsibilities. The later appointment enabled him to devote himself more freely and more effectively. He was very interested in the improved training of young Brothers for whom he set up an advanced Scholasticate. And Brothers who had several years of teaching behind them also joined these courses in order to update their culture, their teaching methods, and their religious studies.

For Brothers who were older he set up a course of spirituality which still exists in the Institute, even if under another name and following a different methodology, one modelled on the Jesuits’ “third Year.” He planned and inaugurated this course of spirituality for Brothers between the ages of 40 and 50, and he called it the “Second Novitiate.” Its modern version is found in the Center for International Lasallian studies (CIL).

Also noteworthy was the service that he created for lay collaborators in the 76 Brothers’ schools in Paris at the time. Over and above the regular retreats that promoted their spiritual and Lasallian formation, he set up a kind of insurance program resembling those that we know today.

During the Franco-Prussian war (1870 – 1871), Brother Exupérien was put in charge of the largest field hospital in Paris: both in the setting up and in the running of it. It was called the “grande ambulance de Longchamp.” He rallied Brothers and other helpers in the hundreds in order to serve as nurses and stretcher bearers. He was also the brains and support behind several initiatives in the Paris region that benefited young people from all walks of life. Among these:

- *The Seine youth clubs*: they operated in the Brothers’ schools and consisted of a whole range of after school activities;
– The Saint Benedict Joseph Labre Society for those who wanted more than the Youth clubs offered and wanted to be better able to support others. After some years the number of members rose to around 1000. Forty years later some 300 priestly and religious vocations had been nurtured from its ranks plus hundreds of truly Christian families, along with the founders of the CFTC (Confédération Française Travailleurs Chrétiens - French Federation of Christian Workers), the French YCW, and the Wooden Cross Singers. And what were the pillars of their formation? Spiritual direction, frequent communion and an annual 3-day retreat.

– The Francs-Bougeois Fellowship and the St. Nicolas Fellowship. The first served young Catholic students belonging to the middle class; the second was established for young workingmen who were obliged to live away from their families;

– The Maison d’Accueil, a kind of Dining Club for business employees, in order to help them dine and meet in good company;

– The Business and Industry employees Union, the first Catholic trade Union in France, from which would grow the CFTC.
From 1897 to 1904 Brother Exupérien formed part of the Higher Council of Public Instruction, serving as a representative of non-State schools. The supernatural influence that he radiated broke down the resistance of some of the members of this national body and led to real conversions, as in the case of Xavier Marmier and François Coppée.

On January 31st 1905, at the age of 76, Brother Exupérien passed away, mourned by many close to him, but also revered by many as a saint.

In 1922 his Cause of beatification and canonization was introduced in the diocese of Paris. In 1990 the Cause made a definite step forward with the publication of the decree of his heroic virtues and the title of Venerable.
We should not forget two Brothers who, though they did not draw crowds as the two preceding ones had, were individuals whom the Lord chose to give birth to two new religious Congregations in the Church.

**BROTHER BERNARD – PHILIPPE FROMENTAL CAYROCHE**

(Chauvet, France, 27.06.1895 – Mexico City, 05.12.1978)
Commonly known as *Hermano Juanito*

The foundation of the first Lasallian Congregation of Sisters outside Europe – the Hermanas Guadalupanas de La Salle – came about because of the enterprising zeal of this religious whose life stretched out from France, his country of origin, to Spain, where he spent his formation years, to Cuba, Mexico, and France once again, where he was to spend 19 years in a kind of “exile,” and finally to Mexico again, where he ended his earthly stay.

This Servant of God did not have an easy existence, not only because of the misunderstandings and obstacles that accompanied his foundation, but also because several times he had to forsake people and places that were particularly dear to him. With these challenges came suffering, but also spiritual reinvigoration. He learned to treasure these crosse and to revise and evaluate his methods directly and humbly, to the point of obtaining full self-mastery...achieving a serenity that enabled him to bear both moral and physical pain.

He was a religious who found strength in prayer, in interior tranquility, and in a faith that enabled him to overcome innumerable trials and to fully accept the orders of his canonical superiors as expressing the will of God himself. He never failed to respect his superiors nor to express his deep gratitude, when close to the end of his life, they allowed him to live close to “his” sisters and to accept their loving care.
In Brother Juanito’s case we do not find the “classical” type of holiness, such as tradition might lead us to expect, but rather one that provides inspiration to the kind of faith that inspires us today, at grips with new problems. What we rediscover is a certain quality of neighbourliness, of discovering others’ needs. We might even discover the value of his “fault”, if one might call by this name his free and easy adhesion to his superiors’ directives; that refreshing embrace of the gospel of charity, of which we often speak, but to which, in practise, we do not give high priority. “By their fruits you shall know them” (Mt. 7, 20)

It can not be denied that his work has transformed hundreds of lives, lives that might have become lives full of faith, hope and charity, of dedication to others, but without purpose or focus. What we are referring to, of course, are the hundreds of excellent religious of the Congregation which Brother Juanito founded and which keeps on growing, having already sunk its roots into three Continents”. 

Brother’s Juanito cause for beatification and canonization was introduced in Mexico City in 1995. The Cause, having reached Rome, now awaits the theologians’ examination with a view towards proclaiming the heroism of his virtues, eventually leading to the title of Venerable.

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In creating the “Unione Catechisti del SS.mo Crocifisso e di Maria Immacolata” Brother Teodoreto appears to be “the prophet newly-inspired,” having given the Church a religious family made up of laymen from every rank of society. Without a shadow of doubt, he was a real prophet in promoting the laity. Vatican II was to do this with all of its authority but would do it fifty years later!

The phenomenon of secular Institutes was quite new in the Church’s life, and the novelty of his contribution was greater than first appears. At that time in the Church’s history, we had not yet witnessed any attempt to unite aspects of religious consecration with living in the world. “They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business on the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life, which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God, so that, being led by the Spirit of the Gospel, they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within (LG, 31).

Lay people, living closely with other people, were able to show how they could be fully faithful to the Gospel without separating themselves from the world. They do so rather by acknowledging authentic Gospel values. In this way these lay people become bearers of light, and salt that gives taste, in the midst of their companions, those who are taken up with running human affairs, showing by means of their practice of poverty how one can use things without the heart becoming attached to them, how one cannot reconstruct the world unless one obeys the laws that God has implanted within the world, how all human love is worthless unless grafted to the love of God and unless it is open to including all people as brothers and sisters.
Brother Teodoreto’s foundation is fully Lasallian. Former Postulator, Brother Leone di Maria wrote: ‘Brother Teodoreto is the first and so far the only Brother who has attempted, and succeeded, in establishing an institution which in no way departs from the spirit of the Institute founded by de La Salle. On the contrary, one must assert with full conviction that it belongs fully and completely, since it expresses the quintessence of the original foundation. With his institution, Brother Teodoreto has brought to a peak the enterprise of Christian education that the holy Founder set before the Brothers’ Institute, guiding the best disposed among the students to the high peaks of Christianity, namely the evangelical counsels; grounding them firmly in that full belonging to the Christian life that is consecration to God: pouring into them that sanctity he himself lived, the spirit of his religious family and his same passion of educator and catechist.

Looking upon Brother Teodoreto’s institution as if it stood at the periphery of the Lasallian project would be to disown it and to distort it. Whoever studies the subject intelligently will agree that his institution holds a central position, perhaps near the very top of the Lasallian project, crowning the splendid pyramid based on the solid ground of basic instruction and civil and religious education, and eventually reaching the heights of faith and love, of authentic holiness. Certainly not everything makes it to the top, but Brother Teodoreto has mapped a possible, although not easy, way. From the Lasallian school perspective, and standing next to its religious educators, we now see the nature of this fruitful offshoot, these lay religious, workingmen who are living in the midst of the world and who, within their own family, provide a bright catechetical flame, bringing light to all sorts of environments and professions.”

The cause for his beatification and canonization was introduced in the diocese of Turin in 1961, and it has been established with Pope John Paul II’s decree on the heroism of his virtues on April 30th 1990. Brother Teodoreto is now Venerable.

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“EVERYDAY” SAINTS

Side by side with the Brothers whom we mentioned earlier and who, thanks to their strong personality, marked the age in which they lived, there are others, also raised to the honors of the altars, but who took a more ordinary road. We could call them “everyday saints,” because they are less eye-catching, less extraordinary and for this reason, much closer to us. Their road to sanctity grew day by day, through the difficulties of community life: intolerance, antipathy, offenses and rudeness, sorrows and opposition. All of them brought about acts of virtues, transforming what appeared as negative into grace, shadows into light. For them every difficulty provided an opportunity to master themselves; the humblest services were carried out as if they were the preferred ones, the more onerous tasks were carried out with total dedication.
He is the first of these everyday saints, canonized in 1967. He came from a farming family, those who earned heaven and their bread from the land. He lived during the Restoration times, with a war raging, while political storms shook Europe. None of this succeeded in shaking his total dedication to the one purpose in his life, his apostolic ministry in the primary schools of Aurillac, Limoges, Moulins, Clermont and Billom, before moving to Saugues, where he labored for the last twenty years of his life.

Nothing very exciting marked his character, his intellect or his apostolic work. There is no grand apostolic undertaking to record; no learned speeches, no pedagogical or ascetical publications, no new foundations or reforms initiated. There was nothing special about him, one might say.

Unbelievable, but true This modest existence proved to be a serious obstacle to his canonization. I would like to quote here what Brother Leone Napione, Postulator at that time said when he intro-
duced the new saint in the “aula magna” of Rome’s Sacred Heart University, on October 28th 1967, on the eve of his canonization: “When saint Thérèse of Lisieux was canonised, her ‘little way’ was not formally recognised. It was similar to the ‘very little way’ of Brother Benilde. It was then inevitable that the Promoter of the Faith, popularly called ‘the devil’s advocate,’ should use this statement of ‘nothing extraordinary’ to deny the heroism of Brother Benilde’ virtues. And with what ardor he did it. That was his job, no doubt, but perhaps it grew out of his personal conviction, raising this animadversion, or objection, at every stage of the process, introduction and then at the three successive stages. The defense lawyers used the cleverest pleading imaginable to oppose the objection: first one lawyer, then a second who finally gave up and was replaced by a third, who argued more boldly and mustered even stronger arguments.

It was Pope Pius XI who saved the humble Brother Benilde from this so often repeated objection. He was a great Pope, one with eyes looking toward heaven and with his Alpine climber’s feet firmly planted on the ground. It was he who made the proclamation, first in somewhat restrained words in the more intimate setting of the general Congregation, but later fully orchestrated in the public address of January 6th 1928. The Pope affirmed the possibility of reaching heroism by fulfilling perfectly one’s daily duties. This truth had remained eclipsed until then. The Pope felt that it should be fully displayed, to shine for ever. In these words – I only quote the gist – Pope Ratti expressed himself:

‘That what is extraordinary, great events, splendid enterprises – just by getting known arise and awaken our best tendencies, acts of generosity, dormant energies often hidden deep in the soul…But that which is common, of everyday occurrence, that which does not stand out, is not brilliant - all that does not excite us and fascinate us. But such is the life of so many people. It is usually woven around common, daily events. For this reason the Church appears to us very wise when we are invited to admire the examples of the commonest and humblest everyday virtues, all the more precious because humble and common. How often do we have to face extraordinary events in life? Very seldom. Woe to us if holiness were to be tied solely to those extraordinary circumstances. What would most people do? And yet the call to holiness is made to all without distinction… Here then is the great lesson this humble Servant of God brings us once again: holiness is not attached to
extraordinary acts, but rather to common, everyday acts performed in an uncommon way’.  

In this way Brother Benilde, without intending to and without wanting to, furnished a great Pontiff with the opportunity to move in the direction of a better interpretation when it comes to valuing heroism through the practice of virtue – from one that is based on the exceptional and the extraordinary to one that is based on the normal and the commonplace. In this way, holiness came to be presented as unsophisticated, as built into the very fabric of everyday life, family life, professional life, civil life, religious life. What a difference there lies between what we see and a reality that was extraordinary, as in Brother Benilde’s case”.

His was a very long process. It started on November 23rd 1899 at Le Puy, France, and it was not until April 4th 1948 that he was beatified by Pius XII On October 29th 1967, he was canonized by Paul VI. His liturgical feast is on August 13th.

“The virtuous will flourish like palm tree, he will thrive like the cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, he will prosper in the courts of our Lord” (Ps. 91, 13-14)

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8 RL, XXXIV(1967)4, 327.
This humble Belgian Brother followed the trial of the “everyday” saints. After his primary schooling, he worked at his father’s blacksmith business in Mellet. But this was not to be his life, because he felt attracted to the life of those teachers whom the Lord had brought into his life. He joined the Brothers, but he realized that before engaging in the apostolate of education, he had to study. This was not his strong point. He did eventually obtain the necessary qualification to teach a class, but he did so at the risk of being shown the door should he prove to be unfit to teach. It was a hard trial, but he discovered those modest services that he could provide: supervision, supplementary lessons in design and music at the big college of Malonne, where he stayed from 1859 until his dying day. Supervision, rehearsals and prayer; these were the three occupations of his life, animated by that total love of God and neighbour that earned him, while he was still alive, the description of “the saint”, “the Brother who prays always”, “the ardent devotee of the Eucharist and of the Holy Mother”.
On the day of his death, people claimed that they had received favors thanks to his prayers. Not even six years after his death, his canonical process was opened, one that led him to the glory of sainthood. 10

On October 30th 1977 he was beatified by Paul VI and on December 10th 1989 canonized by Pope John Paul II. His liturgical feast is on January 30th.

In this same frame of “everyday saints” we have many other Brothers, some already beatified, such as:

Blessed Arnoûld Rèche (1838 – 1890)
Born on September 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1838 at Landroff (Lorraine).
Kindness, good temper, and an invariable patience marked his 13 years of teaching youngsters in Rheims. Later he showed great zeal in training novices. These were the characteristics of a discreet holiness, practiced with delicacy and hardly noticeable.
After his death in Rheims on October 23\textsuperscript{rd} 1890, he was revered as a holy person and was soon on the road to beatification. It was Pope John Paul II who beatified him on November 1\textsuperscript{st} 1987. His memorial is held on October 23\textsuperscript{rd}.

Blessed Scubilion Rousseau (1797 - 1867)
He was born at Annay la Côte (France), on March 21\textsuperscript{st} 1797. For 34 years Reunion Island was the site of his apostolate as a teacher and catechist to the local people. Thanks to him, Christ came to be known, loved and glorified by the poor and the marginalized.
He died at Sainte Marie, Reunion, on April 13\textsuperscript{th} 1867. His tomb is continually visited by pilgrims. He was beatified in Reunion by John Paul II on May 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1989. His liturgical feast is held on September 27\textsuperscript{th}. On the Island itself, his feast is held on December 20\textsuperscript{th}, a national holiday commemorating freedom from slavery.
Others named **Venerables**

**Brother Gregorio Buhl** (1896 – 1973)

He was born in Viilingendorf, Germany, on September 13th 1896. He came to Italy at the age of 17. After the Novitiate he expressed a desire to serve in the missions, but God willed otherwise. In August 1923, he was appointed to the Novitiate community where he was to serve for 50 years as sub-Director.

His deep spiritual life thrived on prayer, on devotion to the Eucharist and on a filial love of the Blessed Virgin Mary. He attained a holy death at Torre del Greco (Naples) on December 11th 1973.

The cause for his beatification was started in Naples on 15 December 1981, and closed in Rome on April 6th with the proclamation of the heroism of his virtues and the title of Venerable.

**Brother Alpert Motsch** (1849 – 1898)

He was born in Eywiller, Alsace, on May 26th 1849. In 1879 he was entrusted with an important apostolic work, headmaster of a large and splendid school, the “Mission St. Joseph”, in Rue Lafayette, Paris, a school for boys of families who had emigrated to Paris from Alsace and Lorraine following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. A capable educator, he knew how to join kindness with firmness in the formation of young students. They responded generously to his zeal by taking part in evening adorations at Montmartre and by joining the St. Benedict Labre Association, founded by Brother Exuperian. He became seriously ill during the Franco-Prussian war, contracting creeping paralysis. It was something that he accepted as a grace from God. He remained in his apostolic work up until the final moment of his life. He died in Paris on April 6th 1898.

He was declared Venerable by Pope John Paul II on January 12th 1996.
Others still are designated as **Servants of God**

**Brother Andrés Hibernón (1880 – 1969)**

He was born on September 3rd 1880 at Beizama (Spain).

He began his apostolate as a primary school teacher. As a young headmaster, he gave proof of his excellent ability as an educator, cultivating both the human and Christian education of his charges, seeing to their proper development. He devoted himself with great zeal to the formation of the young Brothers in the Scholasticate. Later, when he was appointed Provincial Visitor, he showed great charity towards his Brothers, especially the younger ones, appreciating their devotedness and encouraging them. During the Spanish Civil War, he suffered several months’ imprisonment. He died at Griñon on March 11th 1969. His Cause of beatification has been studied with positive result by the theologians and is now awaiting the decree of Venerability.

**Brother Theophanius Leo Châtillon (1871 - 1929)**

He was born in Nicolet (Canada), on October 31st 1871, into a family of artists and fervent Christians. As a youngster he was a model student. He entered the novitiate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools where he received the name of Théophanius - Leo. For 10 years he worked as teacher, and then as Director of a school, before being appointed Director of Novices and Provincial in the United States. His motto was: “Make people happy in order to make them better”.

He died on April 28th 1929. His Cause awaits the official proclamation of the heroism of his virtues from the Congregation of the Saints in Rome.
Brother Adolfo Lanzuela (1894 – 1976)
He was born on November 8th 1894 in Cella, Spain.
He taught for 40 years at La Salle - Montemolín College in Saragozza.
His whole life was marked by his love of God and his love of others like brothers. Those who knew him remember him as a religious model, level-headed and serene.
His main concern was to mold all those he came across into authentic Christians, faithful followers of Christ. He died with a reputation for sanctity on March 14th 1976.
On June 13th 1980, his remains were transferred to La Salle – Montemolín, where they were interred in the chapel of the college.
The diocesan commission ended its work on December 15th 1990 and sent its report to Rome.
At present, the “positio” document on the heroism of his virtues is at the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

Brother Victorino Arnaud (1885 – 1966)
He was born in Onzillon (France) on September 7th. Soon after joining the Brothers, he was forced to go into exile due to the religious persecution at the beginning of the 20th century in France. Cuba welcomed him and it was there that he worked from 1905 until 1961, when a second persecution meant another and more bitter exile. In Cuba he had adapted himself to his new country in a marvellous way, finding as enthusiastic a following for his numerous apostolic activities. In fact, he founded:
- The La Salle Association in 1919
- The Federation of the Cuban Catholic Youth, in 1928, for both men and women;
- The University Catholic Hostel, in 1946
- The Catholic Family Movement in 1953.
From his second exile, after 1961, until his death, he spent all of his energies in trying to reorganize the various Associations among the Cuban refugees in
New York, Miami and Puerto Rico. He died in this country on April 16<sup>th</sup> 1666.

The diocesan enquiry ended on December 15<sup>th</sup> 1990 and sent its report to Rome. At present, the “positio” document on his life, virtues and reputation of sanctity is being assembled.

In the case of all of these men and in the case of others also, it is their everyday holiness that impresses us. They transformed a simple existence, bound up with their school or town, and with the humdrum repetition of ordinary duties and actions, into a continuous gift of themselves to God and to others. “Holiness is not attached to extraordinary acts, but to common, everyday acts performed in an uncommon way”: these were the authoritative words with which Pius XI, as we have already recalled, endowed with a heroic quality “the wearsome tediousness of daily existence”, the “terrible quotidianum”.

"Even today I will answer to your greeting with a smile, kindly..."
FAITHFUL...EVEN TO GIVING ONE’S LIFE
This "Lasallian Martyrology" is not simply a list of names, but it is rather the living witness of members of our Institute who have shared the fate of the disciples of Christ, even to the point of shedding their blood. This kind of response has occurred repeatedly since Christ said to his disciples: “I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Lk 10,3). The wolves that kill them do not realize that by leaving a trail of death behind them they demonstrate, paradoxically, the extent to which the example of the self-sacrifice of Christ on the Cross continues to be powerful and relevant: “By their sacrifice they prolong and diffuse in the world the victory of Christ over sin and death” (John Paul II, Angelus, 24/3/1996).

Death by martyrdom is not something that is improvised. It is prepared for by the daily martyrdom of an everyday life lived generously in the service of God and of others. The testimony of those who knew them along with their own writings are an eloquent proof of this. Their acceptance of death through martyrdom was the culmination of a long period of preparation. And when the moment arrived, they went to their death not with the resignation of the condemned but with the joy and exultation of the victorious.

In our Institute the long row of heroic witnesses of faith, even to the point of giving their lives, is formed by an impressive number of Brothers. They number almost 200! The list begins with the lives violently cut off during the French Revolution and goes on until the present with the shots fired at Brother Jaime Gutierrez by assassins hired by drug dealers on May 21st 1991.

Among this number are included Brothers of all ages: the youngest, Brother Francisco Mallo Sánchez, was only 19 years old, the oldest, Brother Raphaël Pataillot, was 74. They belong to various nationalities: France, Spain, United States, Viet-Nam, Mexico, Poland, Philippines, Rumania,... We can’t write about all of them in a booklet like this, and so we will limit our examples to some of the more significant cases.
Brother Solomon Leclercq, our first martyr (Guillaume-Nicolas-Louis Leclercq, Boulogne-sur-Mer, 14.11.1745 - Paris, 02.09.1792).

Secretary General of the Institute, he was assassinated in the garden of a former Carmelite convent which had been transformed into a prison. This convent was the site of one of the most atrocious massacre perpetrated during the French Revolution. 166 bishops, priests and religious, imprisoned for having refused to take the constitutional civil oath, were subjected to a quick trial and immediately executed. We do not know the details of Brother Solomon’s death, but there is no doubt that he was one of the victims of the massacre on September 2nd, 1792. Some days before his death, unaware of the fate that awaited him, Brother Solomon wrote the following words to one of his sisters: “Let us endure with joy and thanksgiving the crosses and afflictions that he will send us. As for myself, I am not worthy to suffer for him, for I have not yet encountered any problems, and yet there are so many others who are suffering”. (Bull. 244, p. 8) ¹.

Brother Solomon holds the 57th place among the 151 martyrs that are listed in the Teterrima ac miseranda seditio, which is the bull of Pius XI that was issued for their beatification on October 17th, 1926. The liturgical feast is celebrated on September 2nd.
What can we say about Brothers Léon Mopinot (Reims, 12.12.1724, died 21.05.1794), Roger Faverge (Orléans, 25.07.1745, died 12.09.1794) and Jean-Baptiste Guillaume (Fraisans (Besançon), 01.02.1755, died 27.08.1794), who, along with the ones who follow, were victims of the French Revolution?

These intrepid witnesses, having been faithful to the Roman Catholic Church, refused to sign the civil Constitution, and after having been mocked and tortured during the long journey that led them to Rochefort, were hoarded on old boats used as store-ship, hospitals or prisons. On two of these boats there were 829 priests, religious, and even some bishops - all because they had refused to swear the oath of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which would have been considered an apostasy of the faith. Of the 829 prisoners, 542 of them died during the months of captivity in the hulks. All had to endure terrible suffering and oppression, and many died as a result of mistreatment. The 287 survivors were freed on February 12nd 1795. Unfortunately, it has been possible to find sufficient documentation for the canonical process for only 64 of them, and so, only 64 were beatified by Pope John Paul II on October 1st 1995, in the 2nd centenary of their martyrdom. Their liturgical feast is on September 2nd.
**Brother Moniteur Martinet:**
(Mezières, 26.04.1750 – Rennes, 06.10.1794)

He tried to escape from capture but nevertheless was discovered and imprisoned. What happened afterwards is an extraordinary testimony of faith and moral strength. We have at our disposal the deposition of a young man who was present at that time. His refusal to sign the Civil Constitution of the Clergy cost him his life; he was guillotined amidst insults, blasphemies and roars of laughter from the crowd. Shouts of joy and a burst of cheering rose up when the executioner held up his guillotined head by its hair and showed it off as a trophy to the jubilant crowd that had filled the square.

**Brother Raphaël Pataillot:**
(Bouhans (Besançon), 22.01.1720 – Uzès, …? 1794)

Ruffians found him in his bed where he was lying ill and, realizing that, because of his age and his illness he wasn’t able to follow them, the violently beat him and threw him out of a window.

______________________________
Let’s make now the jump of a century and look at the other corner of the world.

**Mexico**

Two *Brothers, Adrien-Marie* (Marvejols (France), 04.06.1860 – Zacatecas, 24.06.1914) and *Adolphe-François* (Cubières (France), 27.08.1869 - Zacatecas, 24.06.1914). Due to the French laws of 1904 against Religious Congregations, mainly those dedicated to the education of the young, these two went to Mexico where they were appointed to a recently opened school in the town of Zacatecas. The former was the Director and the latter was responsible for discipline. After a few years in Mexico, revolution broke out, which included a strong persecution against religion. The town of Zacatecas was controlled by the troops of Pancho Villa, and the two Brothers were arrested on June 23rd 1914. On the day after, there were ferociously assassinated, together with Rev. Fr. Rafael Vega Alvarado, chaplain of the school.

**Viet-Nam**

Two *Brothers Aglibert Nguyen Van Thanh* (05.11.1927 - …? 1968) and *Sylvestre Nguyen Van Diep* (12.12.1943 - …? 1968) carried on their apostolic work in a school for poor children of Phú Vang, on the outskirts of Hué. In February, 1968, the communists fought tooth and nail in order to establish Marxism in the country. The first to pay the price were catholics. And so the two Brothers were arrested and put into prison. During the day they were forced to fill our information forms regarding their work, their families, the people they knew, the places they used to frequent, and so on. What could they write as religious? A childhood at home with their family, a youth among the Brothers of the Christian...
schools, teaching in the school - almost no real connections. Under the pretext that they had lied, without any trial, they were condemned to death. With their arms tightly tied with telephone wire, they were flung, still alive, into a hole, where they subsequently perished.

**Brother James Miller,**
a young Brother, born in Stevens Point (WI, USA), guilty only because he was religious, and on the side of the oppressed, an apostle of Christ’s love and messenger of his justice and peace. He was murdered point-blank at Huehuetenango (Guatemala) on February 13th 1982. He was 37 years old. His cause of martyrdom, together with others, will begin soon.

**Brother Javier Gutiérrez Alvarez,**
headmaster of De La Salle school in Campoamor, Medellin (Colombia). He was shot with 6 bullets in the face and died only because he opposed the drug dealers. And these criminals thought that the best way to warn other generous people who dared to prevent their deadly traffic was to murder him. Brother Jaime was a teacher, a headmaster who carried out his educational mission with generous dedication. At a certain point in his life he met the threat and the risk. Even if he was aware of the threats to his person, he remained where he was... and he was killed! He was 66 years old.
Coming back to Europe, how can we not consider a duplicate copy of the heroic deed that brought Father Maximilian Kolbe to the altar, that of

**Brother Wojciech Trocha?**

(Wieruszow, 17.05.1894 – Majdanek, 31.03.1943) A Brother from Poland, he too was assassinated by the nazists on March 31st 1943 at the concentration camp of Majdanek, near Lublin, having intervened in defense of another prisoner.

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first”

*(John 15, 18)*
A BLOOD-STAINED SPAIN

Rome, Generalate FSC
Martyrs’ Chapel
The Spanish Brothers assassinated during religious persecution number 165. We know all of the details, of their sad and heroic vicissitudes, because we have the testimonies of direct witnesses, sometimes given by the their executioners as part of the official canonical processes.

From the Pontifical Yearbook we know that in 1936 there were 29,902 priests in Spain and a little more than 10,000 religious. At the end of the persecution the killing had included 13 bishops, 4171 priests and seminarians, 2648 religious men and women, and an undefined number of lay committed Catholics. In all, 13% of the diocesan clergy and more than 25% of that religious, Brothers and Sisters included, were slaughtered. (*)

In the same year 1,087 Brothers of the Christian Schools in Spain, divided into 3 Provinces: Barcelona, with 353 Brothers, Madrid, with 311, and Valladolid with 423. At the end of the persecution 165 Brothers had been killed, 15.7% of the total number. 97 Brothers killed in Barcelona’s province, or a percentage of 28%, 60 in Madrid, or a percentage of the 17%, and 8 in Valladolid, or a percentage of 2%. (**) 

Up until today, 9 Brothers have been canonized and 12 Brothers have been beatified from among the martyrs of Spain.

We also know the glorious end of the 8 Brothers of the Community of Turón, a mining village in the Asturia’s region, killed together with their chaplain just in front of the school, a school that was attended by the sons of some of their killers.

They were the first victims in the order of time, a time that foresaw the tempest that was to be unleashed throughout the country within twenty months. They died young, undaunted in front of the death, certain in the knowledge that by giving up their physical lives for their faith they had found eternal life.

(**) Data taken from the Archives of the Generalate FSC, Rome, Via Aurelia 476.
They are Brothers:

Cirilo Bertrán, director of the Community, Marciano José, Victoriano Pio, Julian Alfredo, Benjamin Julian, Augusto Andrés, Aniceto Adolfo and Benito de Jesús (or Hermano Héctor, an Argentinian citizen. He is the first and unique saint of that country).

We also well know the circumstances of the heroic death of the Catalan Brother Jaime Hilarío, a death that caused amazement and fear among those responsible for the execution. Because he remained standing after the first shots were fired and even after a second volley. Frightened, the platoon dropped their guns and fled, while the cursing captain fired his pistol into the temple of the victim, who thus entered into the Kingdom of his Lord, Jesus.

These 9 Brothers, after their beatification, which took place on April 29th 1990, reached the great glory of canonization on November 21st 1999. The miracle that occurred through their intercession, and was studied and approved by the competent Vatican court, was the inexplicable cure of Auxiliadora Bravo Jirón, who was from León (Nicaragua), a miracle that occurred on the same day as their beatification.
Two other groups have already reached the stage of Beatification:

**7 Brothers of Almería:**

- Aurelio María, director of the Community,
- José Cecilio,
- Edmigio,
- Amalio,
- Valerio Bernardo,
- Teodomiro Joaquín and
- Evencio Ricardo.

They were beatified by John Paul II on October 10th 1993. Their feast is celebrated on November 16th.
5 Brothers of Valencia:

Honorato Andrés,
Lorencio Martín,
Ambrosio León,
Bertrán Francisco e
Elias Julian.

These were beatified by John Paul II on March 11th 2001. Their feast falls on September 22nd.

44 Brothers of Barcelona

Adolfo Jaime,
Adolfo Mariano,
Agapio,
Arnoldo Julián,
Benedicto José,
Benito Clemente,
Cándido Alberto,
Cayetano José,
Celestino Antonio,
Cirilo Pedro,
Crisóstomo,
Dionisio Luis,
Edmundo Angel,
Eliseo Vicente,
Emerio José,
Esiquio José,
Eusebio Andrés,
Félix José,
Florencio Miguel,
Francisco Alfredo,
Francisco,
Hilarión Eugenio,
Honesto María,
Honorato Alfredo,
Hugo Julián,
Ildefonso Luis,
Indalecio,
Jacob Samuel,
Jaime,
José Benito,
Lamberto Carlos,
Leónardo José,
Leónides,
León Justino,
Lorenzo Gabriel,
Luis de Jesús,
Mariano León,
Miguel de Jesús,
Olegario Angel,
Onofre,
Raimundo Eloy,
Valeriano Luis,
Vicente Justino,
Victorio.

These Brothers will be beatified in October 2007.
Brothers of Catalunya that, for various reasons, weren’t included in the diocesan Processes:

Alonso-Carlos,  Medardo-Lorenzo,
Augusto-Jaime,  Nicasio-Santiago,
Eduardo-Antonio,  Raimundo-Bernabé,
Emerio de Jesús,  Ramón Nonato.
5 Brothers of the Community of Santa Cruz de Mudela (Process of Ciudad Real):

Agapito León, director, Josafat Roque, Julio Alfonso, Damaso Luis e Ladislao Luis.

4 Brothers of the Community of Consuegra (Process of Toledo):

Teodosio Rafael, director, Eustaquio Luis, Carlos Jorge e Felipe José.

These Brothers will be beatified in October 2007.
5 Brother of the Community of Lorca (Process of Cartagena):


"The Father loves me because I lay down my life in order to take it up again"

(John 10, 17)
The following Brothers are awaiting their Beatification

39 Brothers of Tarragona:

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“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in Heaven. For he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good, and he gives rain to both the just and the unjust”

(Mt 5, 44-45)
Brothers Martyrs of Tarragona
Adalberto Juán,
Ismael Ricardo,
Alejo Andrés,
Javier Eliseo,
Angel Gregorio,
José Alfonso,
Aquilino Javier,
Juán Pablo,
Arturo,
Mariano Pablo,
Basilio Julián,
Mario Felix,
Benjamín León,
Orencio Luis,
Crisóstomo,
Pablo de la Cruz
Daciano,
Sinfronio Miguel,
Eufrasio María,
Sixto Andrés
Floriano Felix,
16 Brothers of Madrid-Sagrado Corazón

Agustín María,  
Anastasio Pedro,  
Anselmo Pablo,  
Braulio Carlos,  
Braulio José,  
Crisólogo,  
Eleuterio Roman,  
Esteban Vicente,  
Ireneo Jacinto,  
Junian Alberto  

Luis Victorio,  
Norberto José,  
Oseas,  
Rogaciano,  
Vidal Ernesto,  
Virginio Pedro

Brothers not included in the canonical Processes:  
Alfonso-Beltrán,  
Florencio-Adolfo
A last word regarding another cruelty committed in Rumania seems appropriate. Rumania is a place where many Brothers were imprisoned and condemned to hard labor during the communist dictatorship. The most representative figure among these Brothers is

**Brother Tiberiu Rața**
(May 2nd 1924 - January 3rd 1999).

He was 24 years old in 1948 when Catholic priests and religious were dispersed and their properties nationalized. He was arrested in 1958, after 10 years in hiding. After a farce of a trial, and with ridiculous accusations, he was condemned to 15 years of hard labor, after which he was sent to the penal settlement of Stoinesti. Together with 800 other prisoners he was put to work building a dike on the Danube River. The situation of these hard labor camps are very well known, because there was no difference between these and the ones that we have seen many times within the nazi or marxist regimes: no way to change clothes, very scarce nourishment, little and bad water, lack of hygiene, continuous beatings and abuses of all kinds, illnesses flourishing among the detainees, and so on. Brother Tiberiu was on the point of dying.

Fortunately, in 1964 there was an amnesty and many prisoners were freed. Among them was Brother Tiberiu. But the new conditions were equally unpleasant because in practice, everyone was under police sur-
veillance, with frequent and humiliating controls and restrictions of every kind. Neither an academic certificate nor any other titles were accepted in trying to find work. From Rome and Vienna the Brothers, with different strategies, tried to help him and the other Brothers, dispersed throughout various localities. Finally he found work at a forest enterprise in Bata Mare, and afterwards in a mine. In 1991, after the end of the tyrannic years of Ceausescu, when the Brothers could meet again, many Spanish Brothers arrived in Rumania in order to help reconstitute some communities. Brother Tiberiu joined the community of Iasi. In the meantime, the Bishop had already offered him hospitality at the seminary, where the Spanish Brothers too went to Mass and other religious ceremonies. After more than forty years on calvary, at least the last years of this authentic “martyr” were serene and he received the estimation and admiration of all those who were at his side.
CONCLUSION

Persecuted and murdered. Why? There were various motives, in particular political ones that often recur when the barbarity of religious persecutions bursts out, offering no explanation since these motives cannot take into account the true significance of martyrdom. It is the fruit of an evil that seeks to stifle what is good and of a hatred that tries to drive out love, as if it were possible to halt the progress of the redemptive process. The situation has been repeated since the time of Jesus, when he said to his disciples: “I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Lk 10, 3).

This booklet can be an incentive to encourage each one of the Brothers and Lasallians around the world to keep in mind what our Founder writes: “You must tear off your own skin, which Saint Paul calls ‘the old man,’ in order to be clothed with the spirit of Jesus Christ, which is, according to the same Apostle, the new man.” (Meditation 159, 3)

Many thanks are due to Brother Emmanuel Sciberras for his English translation of the original Italian text.
COLOURS OF THE DAY

Open your eyes,
look into the sky,
the darkness has come,
the sun came to die.
The evening has come,
the sun disappears,
but Jesus is living,
and his Spirit is near.

Colours of the day
dawn into the mind,
the sun has come up,
the night is behind.
Go down in the city,
Into the streets,
and let’s give the message
to the people we meet.

So,
light up the fire
and let the flame burn,
open the door,
let Jesus return,
take seeds of his Spirit,
let the fruit grow,
tell the people of Jesus,
let his love show.

*Sue Mc Clellan.*
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